When Faith Must Endure

A Pastoral Journey Through the Revelation of St. John

Volume 4D Part 2

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Scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV). Explanations and paraphrases in the commentary are the author's own.

Measured, Protected, and Called to Witness

Revelation 11:1–6

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.
These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.”
— Revelation 11:1–6, KJV

John has just eaten the:
Scroll.
Sweet in his mouth.
Bitter in his:
Stomach.
And the final words of Chapter 10 still hang in the:
Air.
“Thou must prophesy:
Again.”
Then somebody hands John a:
Measuring rod.
Only:
Revelation.
But the transition is not nearly as abrupt as it first:
Appears.
John has received the Word.
John has consumed the Word.
John has been recommissioned to:
Speak.
And now God begins showing him what faithful witness looks like in a world that will not always welcome the:
Witness.

There will be worshipers.
There will be nations.
There will be trampling.
There will be:
Witnesses.
They will prophesy.
They will mourn.
They will face opposition.
And they will stand before:
God.
Chapter 10 prepared the:
Messenger.
Chapter 11 shows us the:
Witness.

1. John Is Given a Measuring Rod

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod."
John receives another:
Object.
First the scroll.
Now the:
Rod.
And once again, John does not choose the object.
It is:
Given.
That small detail continues an important pattern throughout:
Revelation.
John is not directing the:
Vision.
He is receiving:
It.
He does not decide what should be measured.
He does not decide what should remain:
Outside.
He is given the rod.
Then he is given the:
Instructions.
Revelation belongs to God before it ever belongs to:
John.

2. "Rise, and Measure"

John is told:
Measure.
The imagery has deep biblical:
Roots.

Measuring can communicate different things depending upon the:
Context.
It can be associated with construction.
Ownership.
Definition.
Evaluation.
Protection.
Judgment.
So we should resist the temptation to reduce the image too:
Quickly.
But one thing is immediately clear.
God knows precisely what belongs to:
Him.
Nothing in this vision is:
Unnoticed.
Nothing is:
Unmeasured.
Nothing disappears into the confusion of the surrounding: World.

3. The Temple of God

John is told to measure:
“The temple of God.”
And here interpreters have taken different:
Paths.
Some understand John to be describing a literal:
Temple.
Others understand the temple symbolically as God's faithful:
People.
Still others place the image within broader understandings of how Revelation relates Israel, the Church, worship, and the events surrounding the end.
Those discussions deserve to be:
Heard.
But we should be careful not to force John to answer a question he has not yet:
Answered.
John's immediate concern is not providing us with architectural:
Plans.
His concern is identifying what is being measured before:
God.
So we will notice the possibilities.
We will examine the biblical background.
But where Scripture leaves room—
we will leave room:
Too.

4. The Altar

John is also told to measure the:
Altar.
The altar has already carried enormous significance in:
Revelation.
Earlier John saw the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the Word of God and the testimony they had:
Given.
They cried:
“How long?”
The altar therefore cannot be treated merely as religious:
Furniture.
It stands within Revelation's world of:
Worship.
Sacrifice.
Prayer.
Testimony.
And:
Endurance.
Now it is included within what John is commanded to:
Measure.

5. And Those Who Worship There

Then comes the detail that keeps us from treating this as ordinary:
Surveying.
John measures:
People.
“Them that worship therein.”
Whatever else the measuring means, this is clearly not merely about determining the dimensions of a:
Building.
God's attention rests upon:
Worshipers.
People who belong to:
Him.
People who worship in the midst of a world that is becoming increasingly hostile to their:
Witness.
The measuring rod reaches beyond stones and structures.
It reaches:
People.

6. God Knows Those Which Art His

There is something deeply pastoral in that:
Image.

Revelation has shown us enormous:
Forces.
Empires.
Armies.
Demons.
Plagues.
Judgments.
Crowds beyond counting.
Yet God does not lose sight of individual:
Worshipers.
They are:
Known.
They are:
Seen.
They are:
Measured.
The world may treat believers as insignificant.
God does:
Not.
The measuring tells us that God's people have not disappeared into the:
Chaos.

7. But the Outer Court Is Different

Then the instruction changes.
“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not.”
Leave it:
Out.
John has been told what to:
Include.
Now he is told what to:
Exclude.
And again, the distinction belongs to:
God.
John does not decide where the boundary should:
Fall.
God does.
There is something inside the measured space.
And something:
Outside.
Revelation repeatedly confronts us with distinctions like:
These.
Those who worship God.
Those who worship the beast.
Those who bear God's seal.

Those who bear another:
Mark.
The Lamb's kingdom.
The kingdoms of the:
World.
John's visions continually ask:
Where does our allegiance belong?

8. “It Is Given unto the Gentiles”

The outer court is not measured because it has been:
Given over.
Notice the language.
Even here, the nations do not simply seize control because God has somehow lost:
Control.
Their activity occurs within limits they did not:
Create.
This does not make their actions good.
It does not make their violence:
Righteous.
But it reminds us of something Revelation has taught repeatedly.
Evil operates.
But evil does not operate:
Without limit.
There are boundaries around what appears to be:
Chaos.

9. The Holy City Will Be Trampled

The nations will trample the holy:
City.
That is painful language.
God's people are measured—
yet the holy city is:
Trampled.
Those ideas might initially seem:
Contradictory.
If something belongs to God, shouldn't God prevent every form of:
Suffering?
Revelation has never made that:
Promise.
Protection in Revelation does not always mean exemption from:
Suffering.
The martyrs under the altar belonged to God.
They still:
Died.

The saints are called to endurance precisely because faithfulness can be:
Costly.
God's ownership does not mean His people will never be touched by:
Trouble.
It means trouble can never remove them from His:
Ownership.

10. Measured Does Not Mean Untouched

That distinction may be essential for understanding this:
Passage.
Measured does not necessarily mean:
Untouched.
Known does not necessarily mean:
Untroubled.
Protected does not necessarily mean:
Unharmed.
The people of God may suffer.
They may be opposed.
They may even appear to be:
Defeated.
But they are not:
Forgotten.
Revelation keeps teaching the Church that suffering and abandonment are not the same:
Thing.
God's people can experience one without ever experiencing the:
Other.

11. Forty-Two Months

The nations will trample the holy city for:
Forty-two months.
Here is where prophetic calculators begin reaching for their:
Pencils.
We will keep ours in the:
Drawer.
Forty-two months corresponds to three and a half years.
And in the next verse we encounter:
1,260 days.
Using the conventional thirty-day prophetic month, the periods:
Correspond.
That is worth:
Noticing.
But noticing a relationship is different from constructing a:
Calendar.

The number participates in a larger biblical pattern that we will encounter again, particularly in relation to:
Daniel.
Its significance deserves careful attention.
But Revelation has not invited us to select a starting date and begin counting toward:
Armageddon.
John's concern is:
Endurance.

12. The Period Has a Limit

Whatever else we eventually say about the forty-two:
Months—
notice something immediately.
It has an:
End.
The trampling is not:
Forever.
The nations are given:
Forty-two months.
Not eternity.
That is enormously important in a book written to people learning how to:
Endure.
Suffering may feel endless to the person living:
Inside it.
But Revelation repeatedly places boundaries around the apparent triumph of:
Evil.
God's kingdom is forever.
The opposition is:
Not.

13. “I Will Give Power unto My Two Witnesses”

Then the focus changes.
God speaks of:
“My two witnesses.”
Before we ask:
Who are they?
We should notice whose they:
Are.
“My.”
They belong to:
God.
Their authority does not originate in their personalities.
Their courage does not create their:
Commission.

God grants them authority to:
Prophesy.
Their witness begins with divine:
Calling.

14. We Do Not Need to Name Them Yet

Christians have spent centuries asking who these two witnesses:
Are.
Moses?
Elijah?
Enoch?
Two future individuals?
Symbolic representatives of the witnessing:
Church?
There are reasons behind several of those:
Interpretations.
And as the passage unfolds, we will examine the evidence that has led readers toward:
Them.
But John does not give us their:
Names.
So we will not pretend that he:
Did.
They are first introduced simply as:
"My two witnesses."
Perhaps John wants our first question to be less:
"Who are they?"
And more:
"What do faithful witnesses do?"

15. They Prophesy

Their task is:
Clear.
They:
Prophesy.
That connects directly with the final command of Chapter: 10
John was told:
"Thou must prophesy again."
Now God says:
"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy."
The transition is difficult to:
Miss.
Chapter 10 was about receiving God's:
Word.
Chapter 11 is about bearing witness to that:

Word.
The scroll must be eaten.
Then the message must be:
Spoken.

16. One Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Days

Their prophetic ministry lasts:
1,260 days.
Again we encounter the same basic period expressed in another:
Way.
Forty-two months.
1,260 days.
The trampling has a measured period.
The witnessing has a measured period:
Too.
That parallel is striking.
Opposition has its appointed:
Time.
Witness has its appointed:
Time.
The nations may trample.
But while they trample—
God's witnesses still:
Speak.
The presence of opposition does not silence the:
Mission.

17. Wearing Sackcloth

The witnesses prophesy wearing:
Sackcloth.
Sackcloth is hardly the clothing of:
Celebration.
Throughout Scripture it is associated with:
Mourning.
Repentance.
Humility.
Grief.
Their appearance matches the seriousness of their:
Message.
They do not strut through the world celebrating their own:
Importance.
They bear witness with the clothing of:
Lament.
That may tell us something important about prophetic:
Witness.

God's truth should never make His messengers:
Arrogant.
Some truths should be spoken with:
Tears.

18. The Two Olive Trees

John then identifies them through imagery drawn from:
Scripture.
“These are the two olive trees.”
The imagery unmistakably recalls:
Zechariah.
There, olive trees stand beside the lampstand and are associated with those who stand before the Lord.
John draws that imagery into his own:
Vision.
The witnesses do not stand on their own:
Authority.
They stand before the Lord of the:
Earth.
Their strength comes from the God before whom they:
Stand.

19. The Two Lampstands

John also calls them:
The KJV calls them “the two candlesticks”—lampstands that bear light.
That should catch our attention immediately.
Revelation has already taught us something about:
Lampstands.
In Chapter 1, the seven lampstands represented the seven:
Churches.
That does not automatically settle the identity of the two witnesses.
But it certainly belongs in the:
Conversation.
John has chosen imagery already associated with the witnessing presence of God's:
People.
Whatever final conclusions we reach, we should not ignore John's own symbolic:
Vocabulary.

20. They Stand Before the Lord of the Earth

The witnesses stand before:
“The Lord of the earth.”
That is their true:
Position.
The world may see two vulnerable:

Witnesses.
God sees servants standing before:
Him.
Their authority comes not from social approval.
Not from political influence.
Not from military strength.
Not from popularity.
They stand before the:
Lord.
That is enough.

21. Their Witness Will Be Opposed

Then John introduces the:
Conflict.
“And if any man will hurt them...”
Their testimony will not be universally:
Welcomed.
Truth rarely is.
Their witness creates:
Opposition.
But opposition does not mean they have stepped outside God's:
Will.
Sometimes opposition comes precisely because they are faithfully carrying out God's:
Commission.
That distinction will become even more important as Chapter 11:
Continues.

22. Fire From Their Mouth

John says fire pours from their mouth and consumes their:
Enemies.
Again, we are standing inside apocalyptic:
Imagery.
And again, caution serves us:
Well.
We should not immediately turn the witnesses into supernatural:
Flamethrowers.
The imagery communicates the devastating authority attached to their prophetic:
Word.
Scripture has used similar imagery for prophetic speech before.
God's Word is not:
Powerless.
The witnesses may appear vulnerable.
Their testimony is:

Not.

23. The Echoes of Elijah

Verse 6 tells us they have authority to shut the sky so that no rain may:
Fall.
That naturally reminds us of:
Elijah.
Elijah announced a drought during the reign of:
Ahab.
That connection helps explain why many interpreters have associated one of the witnesses with:
Elijah.
It is a reasonable biblical:
Connection.
But resemblance is not the same as:
Identification.
John gives us Elijah-like:
Authority.
He does not say:
"This witness is Elijah."
We should preserve the distinction.

24. The Echoes of Moses

The witnesses also have authority over waters:
"To turn them into blood."
And to strike the earth with every kind of:
Plague.
Those words naturally call:
Moses—
and the Exodus—
to mind.
Again, the connection is:
Strong.
And again, it helps explain why Moses and Elijah have so often been proposed as the identities of the two:
Witnesses.
But once more:
Echo is not necessarily identity.
John may be showing us prophetic ministry characterized by the power associated with these great figures without telling us that the witnesses literally are those:
Figures.
When Scripture stops speaking—
we stop speaking:
Too.

25. The Witnesses Stand in the Prophetic Story

Perhaps that is the safer and richer point.
The witnesses stand within the long history of God's prophetic:
Witness.
Moses.
Elijah.
Zechariah.
The prophets.
And now:
Revelation.
God has always raised witnesses who speak His Word in circumstances where that Word is not easily:
Received.
The names change.
The opposition changes.
The circumstances change.
The calling remains:
Witness.

26. Authority Does Not Mean Ease

These witnesses possess extraordinary:
Authority.
Yet the next portion of the chapter will show us something:
Sobering.
Authority does not mean their ministry will be:
Easy.
God-given power does not mean they will never:
Suffer.
Faithfulness does not guarantee earthly:
Invulnerability.
Their authority enables them to complete the testimony God has given:
Them.
And that distinction will matter enormously when we reach Verse: 7
Their story is not ultimately about avoiding:
Death.
It is about completing their:
Witness.

27. Witness in the Midst of Trampling

Put the passage together.
The holy city is being:
Trampled.
The nations appear to have the upper:
Hand.
The period of opposition continues.

And what is God doing?
Sending:
Witnesses.
That may be the central pastoral truth of the entire:
Passage.
God does not wait until the world becomes friendly before He calls His people to:
Witness.
He sends witnesses into the very place where witness is:
Needed.
Darkness does not suspend the:
Mission.
Opposition does not cancel the:
Message.
The world may trample.
The witnesses still:
Speak.

28. Measured, Protected, and Called

That brings us back to where the passage:
Began.
Measure.
Know what belongs to:
God.
Recognize that opposition has:
Limits.
Then:
Witness.
The people of God are not preserved merely so they can:
Survive.
They are preserved so they can remain:
Faithful.
Revelation never separates endurance from:
Mission.
The Church endures—
so that the Church may continue to:
Witness.

Pastoral Reflection

There are times when Christians look at the world around them and wonder whether faithful witness can still make any:
Difference.
The culture changes.
Institutions change.
Values change.

Opposition grows.
Things that once seemed secure become:
Uncertain.
And we may be tempted to conclude that the Church's primary responsibility is simply to protect:
Itself.
Revelation offers another:
Vision.
God knows those who are:
His.
He measures.
He sets boundaries.
He knows how long the trampling will:
Last.
And in the middle of it all—
He sends:
Witnesses.
The Church does not need ideal circumstances in order to be:
Faithful.
It needs the authority of the God who calls it to:
Speak.
That does not mean shouting louder than everyone:
Else.
The witnesses wear:
Sackcloth.
There is humility in their witness.
Grief in their witness.
Seriousness in their:
Witness.
But there is also courage.
Because they know before whom they:
Stand.
Not merely before the nations.
Not merely before those who oppose:
Them.
They stand before:
The Lord of the earth.
And that changes everything.

Something Worth Pondering

The nations are given forty-two:
Months.
The witnesses are given 1,260:
Days.

Opposition has a measured:
Time.
Witness has a measured:
Time.
Neither is outside the knowledge of:
God.
But only one belongs to the kingdom that will last:
Forever.
That means the Church does not need to panic when darkness appears to be:
Winning.
Nor does it need to retreat until circumstances become:
Safer.
It needs to do what God's people have always been called to:
Do.
Receive the Word.
Live the Word.
Speak the Word.
And trust the outcome to:
God.

Ask Yourself This:

When circumstances become difficult, is my first instinct to retreat—or to ask how I can remain a faithful witness?
Do I understand God's protection primarily as freedom from suffering, or as His faithfulness to hold me even through suffering?
And if God has given me a time to witness, am I using that time faithfully?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:1

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.”
— Revelation 11:1, KJV

John has just been told:
“Thou must prophesy again.”
And now something else is placed into his:
Hand.
Not a scroll this time.
A measuring:
Rod.
The scroll was to be:
Eaten.
The rod is to be:
Used.
John has received the Word.
Now he is commanded to:
Measure.
The temple.
The altar.
And most surprisingly—
the people who worship:
There.
Whatever this measuring means, John is clearly doing more than determining the dimensions of a:
Building.
God is drawing attention to what belongs to:
Him.
And among the things God notices most carefully are those who:
Worship.

1. “And”

The verse begins simply:
“And.”
But Revelation 11 does not begin disconnected from what has just:
Happened.
John has eaten the little:
Scroll.
It was sweet in his mouth.
Bitter in his:

Stomach.
Then he was told:
“Thou must prophesy again.”
Now:
“And there was given me...”
The sequence matters.
John receives the Word.
John internalizes the Word.
John is recommissioned.
Then John is given another:
Task.
Revelation continues moving:
Forward.

2. “There Was Given Me”

Once again, John receives something he did not:
Create.
“There was given me.”
That language has appeared repeatedly throughout:
Revelation.
Authority is given.
Permission is given.
Power is given.
Objects are given.
Times are:
Given.
John's vision continually reminds us that ultimate authority does not originate with the creatures who exercise:
It.
John does not walk around heaven looking for something useful to:
Do.
The rod is placed into his:
Hand.
His task begins with what God:
Provides.

3. A Reed Like unto a Rod

The KJV describes a “reed like unto a rod.” It is a measuring instrument, not merely an object to admire.
“A measuring rod.”
The Greek term refers to a reed or cane that could be used as a measuring:
Instrument.
This is not merely a decorative:
Staff.
John is expected to do something with:

It.
Measure.
Determine boundaries.
Identify what is being:
Included.
That immediately raises the question:
Why?
John does not yet give us a complete explanation.
So we should resist supplying one too:
Quickly.
But measuring in Scripture can carry ideas of:
Assessment.
Definition.
Ownership.
Preservation.
Judgment.
Preparation.
The context must tell us which ideas are most:
Important.

4. “Like unto a Rod”

John describes the rod as being:
“Like a staff.”
It is substantial enough to be compared with something a person might:
Carry.
The image has weight.
Purpose.
Function.
John is not handed something symbolic merely so that he can look at:
It.
He is expected to:
Act.
Revelation frequently moves John from observer to:
Participant.
He watches.
Then he is told to:
Write.
He hears.
Then he is told to:
Eat.
Now he receives.
And he is told to:
Measure.
Revelation does not allow John to remain merely a:

Spectator.

5. “Rise, and Measure”

The command is:
Direct.
“Rise, and measure.”
John is not asked to estimate.
Not asked to:
Guess.
Measure.
The language suggests intentionality and:
Precision.
Whatever is being measured matters enough to be deliberately:
Marked out.
There is something comforting in that.
The world John sees may appear:
Chaotic.
But God is not:
Confused.
He knows what belongs within His:
Purposes.
He knows what is His.

6. Measuring Has Biblical History

John is not the first biblical prophet to encounter:
Measuring.
The imagery appears elsewhere in Scripture in visions involving Jerusalem, the temple, restoration, judgment, and God's purposes for His:
People.
Ezekiel sees an elaborate measuring of the temple in his later:
Vision.
Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line going to measure:
Jerusalem.
Other biblical passages use measuring imagery in different:
Ways.
That should make us cautious about assigning one rigid meaning every time a measuring instrument appears.
Biblical imagery carries context.
John's context must guide:
Us.

7. The Temple of God

John's first assignment is to measure:
“The temple of God.”
And immediately we encounter one of Chapter 11's major interpretive:
Questions.

What temple?
Readers have answered that question in different:
Ways.
Some understand John to be referring to a literal temple associated with future events.
Others understand the temple symbolically as representing God's people or the worshiping community.
Others relate the imagery to heavenly realities or to John's broader use of temple language.
Those interpretations deserve careful:
Consideration.
But Verse 1 itself does not settle every question.
So neither should:
We.
We begin with what John actually:
Says.
It is:
"The temple of God."

8. We Should Not Build More Than John Gives Us

It is tempting to take the word "temple" and immediately begin constructing an entire prophetic:
System.
When will it be built?
Where will it stand?
Who will worship there?
What historical events must happen:
First?
Those can become enormous discussions.
But John has not answered those questions in this:
Verse.
Our responsibility is not to make Revelation say everything we might like to:
Know.
Our responsibility is to hear what Revelation actually:
Says.
And our familiar guardrail serves us well:
When Scripture stops speaking, we stop speaking too.

9. The Altar Is Measured Too

John is also told to measure:
"The altar."
The altar is not unfamiliar territory in:
Revelation.
In Chapter 6, John saw beneath the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the Word of God and the testimony they had:

Given.
Their cry was:
“How long?”
Later, the altar appears again in connection with prayer and:
Judgment.
So when the altar appears here, Revelation has already given it theological:
Weight.
It is associated with worship.
Sacrifice.
Prayer.
Martyrdom.
And faithful:
Testimony.

10. The Altar Reminds Us of the Cost of Witness

We are about to meet two:
Witnesses.
That makes the presence of the altar particularly:
Interesting.
The altar has already reminded us that faithful testimony may become:
Costly.
The martyrs under the altar had borne witness.
And they had:
Suffered.
Now John measures the altar immediately before the vision introduces two witnesses whose testimony will also become:
Costly.
We should not force the connection beyond what John:
Says.
But neither should we ignore the echoes Revelation has already:
Created.
The altar stands within a book where worship and witness are never far removed from:
Endurance.

11. Then John Measures People

And now comes perhaps the most surprising part of the:
Verse.
John is told to measure:
“Them that worship therein.”
People.
Suddenly ordinary architectural measurement no longer explains the:
Scene.
You can measure a temple.
You can measure an altar.

But how do you measure:
Worshipers?
John is clearly showing us something more than dimensions.
The measuring has theological:
Meaning.
God is concerned not merely with sacred space.
God is concerned with sacred:
People.

12. Worshipers Are Not Lost in the Crowd

Revelation contains enormous:
Numbers.
Armies.
Nations.
Multitudes.
Kings.
Peoples.
Tribes.
Languages.
Crowds beyond counting.
It would be easy for an individual believer to feel very:
Small.
But here God directs John's attention toward:
“Them that worship therein.”
They are not anonymous to:
God.
They are not swallowed by the:
Crowd.
They are included within what John is commanded to:
Measure.
God knows His:
Worshipers.

13. God Measures More Than Buildings

Human beings often become impressed by:
Buildings.
Sanctuaries.
Cathedrals.
Architecture.
Facilities.
Structures.
But John's measuring rod reaches beyond the temple and the:
Altar.
It reaches the:
Worshipers.

That should make the Church think.
A beautiful sanctuary can be:
Measured.
An impressive altar can be:
Measured.
But God is also concerned with the people standing before:
Him.
Worship is never ultimately about the place alone.
It is about the hearts of those who come before:
God.

14. Worship Is Central to Revelation

That should not surprise us.
Revelation has been filled with:
Worship.
The living creatures worship.
The elders worship.
The multitude worships.
The angels worship.
Those who belong to the Lamb:
Worship.
And repeatedly Revelation contrasts true worship with false:
Worship.
Who receives worship becomes one of the defining questions of the:
Book.
God?
The Lamb?
The dragon?
The beast?
The issue is ultimately one of:
Allegiance.
So when John measures “them that worship therein,” we should hear more than religious:
Activity.
Worship identifies where the heart's ultimate loyalty:
Rests.

15. Measuring May Mark Belonging

Within this context, the measuring seems at least to carry the sense that what is measured is specially identified before:
God.
Marked out.
Known.
Recognized.
Belonging within His:

Concern.
We should be careful about pressing the symbolism farther than the text:
Allows.
But the contrast with Verse 2 will make one thing unmistakable.
Some things are:
Measured.
Something else is deliberately left:
Out.
There is a boundary.
And God knows exactly where that boundary:
Lies.

16. Belonging to God Does Not Mean Avoiding Trouble

We need this guardrail before we reach the next:
Verse.
It would be easy to assume:
Measured equals protected.
Protected equals untouched.
Untouched equals no:
Suffering.
Revelation has already shown us otherwise.
The martyrs belong to:
God.
They suffered.
The churches belong to:
Christ.
They faced persecution.
The saints are sealed.
They are still called to:
Endure.
God's ownership does not guarantee freedom from every earthly:
Trial.
It guarantees something deeper.
Nothing that happens to God's people can make them cease belonging to:
Him.

17. God Knows What Belongs to Him

Perhaps that is where Verse 1 speaks most tenderly to the:
Church.
John is about to describe trampling.
Opposition.
Prophetic witness.
Violence.
Death.
Celebration over the apparent defeat of God's:

Servants.
Those scenes could make believers wonder:
Does God see?
Does God know?
Has God lost track of His:
People?
Verse 1 answers before those questions are even:
Asked.
Measure the temple.
Measure the altar.
Measure the worshipers.
God knows exactly what belongs to:
Him.

18. Before the Trampling Comes the Measuring

The order may matter pastorally.
Verse 2 will tell us about:
Trampling.
But Verse 1 comes:
First.
Before John sees what will be trampled, he is shown what God:
Knows.
Before the opposition is described, belonging is:
Established.
Before suffering appears, God's attention is:
Declared.
That does not remove the suffering.
But it changes how suffering is:
Understood.
The people of God do not enter trouble:
Unnoticed.
They enter it already:
Known.

19. The Measuring Rod Is Not the Final Word

John begins Chapter 11 holding a:
Rod.
But the chapter will eventually end with heaven:
Opened.
The ark of God's covenant will be:
Seen.
Between those scenes lies witness.
Opposition.
Death.
Vindication.

Worship.
Judgment.
And the seventh:
Trumpet.
Verse 1 is only the beginning.
But it gives us something we will need for everything that:
Follows.
Before we see what happens to God's witnesses—
we are reminded that God knows who belongs to:
Him.

Pastoral Reflection

There are seasons when life can make a person feel:
Invisible.
The world keeps moving.
Crowds keep passing.
Institutions keep functioning.
Other people seem to carry on.
And somewhere in the middle of all of it we may quietly wonder:
Does God really see:
Me?
Revelation 11 begins with an unusual but beautiful:
Picture.
God tells John to:
Measure.
The temple.
The altar.
And:
The worshipers.
People matter enough to God to be included in the:
Measurement.
That does not mean they will never:
Suffer.
Chapter 11 will make that painfully:
Clear.
But suffering is not the same as being:
Forgotten.
The God who calls His people to endure knows exactly who is:
Enduring.
The God who calls His people to worship knows exactly who is:
Worshiping.
The God who calls His people to witness knows exactly who is:
Witnessing.
We may sometimes feel lost in the crowd.

We are never lost to:
God.

Something Worth Pondering

Before Revelation 11 tells us about trampling—
it tells us about:
Measuring.
Before it tells us about opposition—
it reminds us of:
Belonging.
Before the witnesses face the world—
God establishes that He knows what is:
His.
Perhaps that order is worth:
Remembering.
Trouble may change our circumstances.
It cannot change whose we:
Are.
The measuring rod does not promise an easy:
Journey.
It reminds us that no part of that journey takes place outside the knowledge of:
God.

Ask Yourself This:

When circumstances make me feel unnoticed, do I still trust that God knows exactly where I am?
Do I think of worship mainly as something that happens in a sacred place—or as an expression of the allegiance of my life?
And when suffering comes, can I remember that being troubled is not the same thing as being forgotten?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:2

“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”
— Revelation 11:2, KJV

Verse 1 told John what to:
Measure.
Verse 2 tells him what not to:
Measure.
There is an:
Outside.
There is a:
Boundary.
And John is specifically told:
Leave that out.
Then comes a troubling explanation.
The outer court has been given over to the:
Nations.
The holy city will be:
Trampled.
And it will happen for:
Forty-two months.
The people of God have just been measured.
Now the holy city is:
Trampled.
That tension is important.
Because Revelation is about to teach us something we will need throughout the rest of the:
Book.
Belonging to God does not mean God's people will never experience:
Suffering.
But suffering does not mean God has lost:
Control.
The trampling has a:
Limit.

1. “But”

The verse begins with:
“But.”
John has just been told:
Measure.

The temple.
The altar.
The worshipers.
But—
something is deliberately:
Excluded.
That contrast helps us understand the measuring of Verse: 1
The measurement establishes a:
Distinction.
Something is included.
Something is:
Not.
John is being shown a boundary that he did not:
Create.

2. The Court Outside the Temple

John is told not to measure:
“The court which is without the temple.”
The reference naturally recalls the arrangement of the Jerusalem:
Temple.
There were spaces associated with differing degrees of access and:
Holiness.
But once again we should be careful.
John is seeing an apocalyptic:
Vision.
And Verse 1 has already told us that worshipers themselves are being:
Measured.
So whatever physical imagery stands behind the scene, John's concern reaches beyond:
Architecture.
The boundary has theological:
Meaning.

3. “Do Not Measure”

The command could hardly be more:
Direct.
Do not:
Measure.
John is not told that he accidentally overlooked the outer:
Court.
He is deliberately instructed to exclude:
It.
That means the difference between what is measured and what is not measured belongs to the:
Vision.

It is intentional.
And it comes from:
God.
John does not decide where the boundary:
Falls.

4. “Leave Out”

Then the instruction becomes even more:
Explicit.
“Leave that out.”
The language reinforces the:
Separation.
There are things within the measured space.
And there is something deliberately left:
Outside.
Revelation repeatedly confronts us with boundaries of:
Allegiance.
The seal of God.
The mark of the beast.
Those who worship the Lamb.
Those who worship the:
Beast.
The city of God.
Babylon.
These distinctions are not always comfortable.
But Revelation does not erase:
Them.

5. “For It Is Given unto the Gentiles”

Then John tells us:
Why.
The outer court “is given unto the:
Gentiles.”
Again we encounter that important Revelation word:
Given.
The nations act.
But their authority is:
Given.
The forces opposing God repeatedly appear powerful.
But Revelation repeatedly reminds us that their freedom is never:
Absolute.
They operate within limits they did not:
Establish.
They do not write the final chapter of the:
Story.

6. Given Does Not Mean Approved

We need an important distinction:
Here.
Something being permitted does not mean it is:
Approved.
God allowing the nations to trample does not make trampling:
Good.
Throughout Scripture, God can permit human beings to act according to their rebellion while still holding them responsible for what they:
Do.
Divine sovereignty does not transform evil into:
Good.
The nations remain responsible for their:
Actions.
But their actions never place them beyond God's ultimate:
Authority.

7. “The Gentiles”

The KJV says “Gentiles,” referring here to the nations outside the measured sanctuary. The nations have appeared throughout:
Revelation.
Sometimes the nations appear in rebellion.
Sometimes they appear under judgment.
Eventually Revelation will show people from every nation participating in the worship of:
God.
So we should avoid treating “the nations” as though ethnicity itself were the:
Problem.
The issue is not nationality.
The issue is opposition to:
God.
Revelation's ultimate vision is not the elimination of the nations.
It is their proper place beneath the reign of:
God.

8. They Will Trample

The verb is:
Violent.
“They will trample.”
This is not peaceful coexistence.
It is domination.
Desecration.
Oppression.
The image carries the weight of something sacred being treated as though it were:

Worthless.
What God calls holy, the nations:
Trample.
That is the nature of rebellion.
It does not recognize the value God places upon what belongs to:
Him.

9. The Holy City

John calls it:
“The holy city.”
Again interpreters disagree about precisely how the imagery should be:
Understood.
Jerusalem naturally stands behind the:
Language.
But Revelation's use of city imagery will eventually become much larger than geography:
Alone.
Later John will show us the holy city, the new:
Jerusalem.
So we should allow the imagery to develop as Revelation develops:
It.
We do not need to settle every question in Verse: 2
John gives us enough for now.
The city belongs to:
God.
It is called:
Holy.
And yet it is:
Trampled.

10. Holy Does Not Mean Untouchable

That may be one of the most difficult truths in the:
Verse.
The city is:
Holy.
And the city is:
Trampled.
Those realities coexist.
We sometimes assume that if something belongs to God, God will prevent anyone from ever:
Touching it.
Revelation repeatedly challenges that:
Assumption.
The saints belong to God.
Some are:

Killed.
The witnesses belong to God.
They will be:
Killed.
Jesus is the Lamb of God.
He was:
Crucified.
Holiness does not guarantee immunity from:
Suffering.

11. Measured Does Not Mean Untouched

Now the relationship with Verse 1 becomes:
Clearer.
The temple is measured.
The altar is measured.
The worshipers are:
Measured.
Yet Verse 2 introduces:
Trampling.
God's knowledge of His people does not mean His people will never encounter:
Opposition.
The measuring does not promise that nothing painful can:
Happen.
It promises something more enduring.
God knows what belongs to:
Him.
Suffering cannot erase that:
Belonging.

12. Protection in Revelation Is Deeper Than Escape

This is a theme we have encountered:
Before.
Revelation's picture of divine protection is not always:
Escape.
Sometimes God protects His people:
From.
Sometimes God preserves His people:
Through.
And sometimes faithful endurance carries God's people all the way:
Home.
That distinction matters enormously.
Otherwise suffering can make us conclude that God has somehow failed to keep His:
Promises.

Revelation says:
No.
The Lamb Himself conquered through what looked like:
Defeat.
The Church should not be surprised when faithful witness sometimes follows the same:
Pattern.

13. Forty-Two Months

Then John gives us a:
Number.
Forty-two:
Months.
And whenever Revelation gives us a number, someone eventually reaches for a:
Calculator.
But we will keep our calculators safely:
Holstered.
Forty-two months corresponds to three and a half:
Years.
And the next verse will describe the witnesses prophesying for:
1,260 days.
Using the conventional thirty-day month:
42 × 30 = 1,260.
The relationship is unmistakable.
The trampling and the witnessing occur within corresponding:
Periods.

14. The Daniel Background

The three-and-a-half pattern has important biblical:
Roots.
Daniel uses related expressions involving a divided period of:
Seven.
That background will continue to matter as Revelation:
Develops.
John is not inventing this symbolic world from:
Nothing.
He is drawing from the prophetic language of:
Scripture.
But recognizing Daniel behind Revelation is not the same as receiving permission to construct an exact modern:
Timetable.
Biblical background should illuminate the text.
It should not become an excuse to outrun:
It.

15. The Number Is Also a Boundary

Whatever additional significance the forty-two months may:
Carry—
one thing is obvious.
Forty-two months is not:
Forever.
The trampling has a:
Limit.
The nations do not receive unlimited:
Time.
Their apparent triumph has an expiration:
Date.
That may be the most pastorally important thing about the number.
Evil may be permitted to operate.
But evil does not receive:
Eternity.

16. The Clock Belongs to God

Chapter 10 told us:
“There should be time no longer.”
Now Chapter 11 gives us a measured period:
Forty-two months.
The two ideas belong comfortably:
Together.
God's purposes move according to His:
Timing.
The nations do not decide how long the story:
Runs.
The beast will not decide.
The witnesses will not decide.
John does not decide.
God does.
The clock belongs to:
God.

17. Trampling and Witnessing Happen Together

Verse 3 will introduce something:
Remarkable.
While the holy city is being:
Trampled—
God's witnesses are:
Prophesying.
The forty-two months of Verse 2 correspond to the 1,260 days of Verse: 3
That means Revelation does not give us:
First the darkness.

Then later the:
Witness.
The witness exists in the midst of the:
Darkness.
The nations trample.
The witnesses:
Speak.

18. God Does Not Wait for Ideal Conditions

That may be one of the strongest pastoral implications of the:
Passage.
God does not wait until opposition disappears before sending His:
Witnesses.
He does not wait until society becomes:
Friendly.
He does not wait until everyone agrees.
He does not wait until speaking becomes:
Safe.
The testimony occurs during the very period of:
Trampling.
Faithful witness does not require ideal:
Conditions.
It requires a faithful:
God.

19. The Trampling Is Real—but Temporary

We should not minimize the:
Trampling.
Revelation does not.
Suffering is real.
Opposition is real.
Loss is real.
The pain of God's people is:
Real.
Christian hope does not require pretending otherwise.
But Revelation adds another word:
Temporary.
Forty-two months.
Measured.
Limited.
Bounded.
The suffering is real.
But it does not receive the final:
Word.

20. The Kingdom Will Outlast the Trampling

We already know where this chapter is:
Going.
Verse 15 will announce:
“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.”
That kingdom lasts:
Forever and ever.
Now compare:
Forty-two months.
Forever and ever.
There is the perspective Revelation wants the suffering Church to:
See.
Opposition may feel enormous while we are living inside:
It.
But measured against eternity—
the trampling is:
Temporary.
The kingdom is:
Not.

Pastoral Reflection

There are seasons when it seems as though everything sacred is being:
Trampled.
Values we thought were secure.
Institutions we trusted.
Relationships we cherished.
Convictions we assumed others:
Shared.
Sometimes even faith itself can feel as though it is being pressed beneath the weight of circumstances beyond our:
Control.
Revelation does not tell us those experiences are:
Imaginary.
The holy city is:
Trampled.
But it is trampled for:
Forty-two months.
There is a boundary around the:
Pain.
God has not surrendered the:
Clock.
And while the trampling continues, something else will be happening:
Witness.

God's people do not need to wait for the world to become safe before they become:
Faithful.
They can worship while the nations:
Trample.
They can witness while opposition:
Continues.
They can endure because the kingdom toward which they are moving is not measured in:
Months.
It lasts:
Forever.

Something Worth Pondering

The holy city is:
Trampled.
But the trampling is:
Measured.
Forty-two months.
Not forever.
Perhaps that is one of Revelation's recurring gifts to suffering:
People.
It does not pretend darkness is not:
Dark.
It tells us darkness is not:
Permanent.
The nations may have their:
Hour.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
And there is an enormous difference between an hour—
and:
Eternity.

Ask Yourself This:

When something I value is being threatened or trampled, do I interpret that as evidence that God has lost control?
Can I distinguish between God's permission and God's approval?
And when suffering feels endless, can I trust that God sees boundaries I cannot yet see?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:3

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”
— Revelation 11:3, KJV

The holy city is being:
Trampled.
The nations have been given:
Forty-two months.
And now God says:
“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall:
Prophesy.”
That changes the picture.
The period of trampling is also a period of:
Witness.
The darkness does not silence God's:
Word.
Opposition does not cancel God's:
Mission.
While the nations trample—
the witnesses:
Speak.
And they speak not because the world has given them permission.
They speak because God has given them:
Authority.

1. “And I Will Give Power”

The verse begins with God:
Giving.
“And I will give power.”
The witnesses do not create their own:
Authority.
They do not seize it.
They do not earn it.
It is:
Granted.
That immediately tells us something about the nature of their:
Ministry.
Their authority comes from:
God.
The world may reject their message.
The nations may oppose their testimony.

But neither rejection nor opposition determines whether they have the right to:
Speak.
Their commission comes from somewhere:
Higher.

2. Authority Belongs to the One Who Sends

A witness does not possess authority merely because the witness speaks:
Confidently.
Volume is not:
Authority.
Personality is not:
Authority.
Popularity is not:
Authority.
Political influence is not:
Authority.
The witnesses speak because God has:
Sent them.
Their authority is:
Delegated.
That means their authority is also:
Limited.
They are authorized to speak God's:
Message.
Not whatever they happen to:
Prefer.
The faithful messenger does not create the message.
The faithful messenger carries:
It.

3. “My Two Witnesses”

Before John tells us anything else about them, God calls them:
“My.”
That may be more important than knowing their:
Names.
They belong to:
God.
They are His:
Witnesses.
Their identity begins not with who they may have been in biblical history—but with whose they:
Are.
And that is a good place for us to begin:
Too.

Before asking:
Who are these two witnesses?
Perhaps we should first hear:
They belong to God.

4. Why Two?

The number:
Two—
is significant within the biblical tradition of:
Witness.
Under the Law, important matters were established by the testimony of two or more:
Witnesses.
Jesus also drew upon that principle.
Two witnesses therefore communicate the idea of:
Valid testimony.
Confirmed testimony.
Adequate:
Witness.
That does not by itself tell us whether these are two literal individuals, symbolic representatives, or something more complex within John's:
Vision.
But the number fits naturally with the biblical language of reliable:
Testimony.

5. We Still Do Not Know Their Names

And here is where curiosity immediately wants to take:
Over.
Who are:
They?
Moses and Elijah?
Elijah and Enoch?
Two future prophets?
Representatives of the witnessing:
Church?
John has not yet:
Said.
The following verses will give us important imagery and biblical:
Echoes.
We should examine them carefully.
But at Verse 3 the safest answer to the question—
“Who are the two witnesses?”
—is:
John has not told us.
And that is enough for:

Now.

6. Their Function Comes Before Their Identity

Perhaps there is a reason John tells us what they do before telling us anything that might help us identify:
Them.
They:
Witness.
They:
Prophesy.
That is what matters first.
Revelation is often less interested in satisfying our curiosity than in shaping our:
Faithfulness.
We want:
Names.
John gives us:
Mission.
We want identities.
John gives us:
Witness.
Maybe we should pay attention to what John emphasizes.

7. Power to Prophesy

Their mission is:
Prophetic.
They are given authority to:
Prophesy.
That connects immediately with the final words of Chapter: 10
John had just been told:
“Thou must prophesy again.”
Now God says:
“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy.”
That connection is difficult to:
Miss.
The little book has been eaten.
The prophet has been recommissioned.
Now the vision expands into the larger reality of faithful:
Witness.
The Word received must become the Word:
Proclaimed.

8. Prophecy Is Not Fortune-Telling

We should be careful with the word:
Prophesy.

In popular imagination, prophecy often becomes little more than predicting future:
Events.
Biblically, prophecy is much:
Larger.
Prophets speak the Word of:
God.
Sometimes that Word concerns the future.
Sometimes it confronts the:
Present.
Sometimes it calls people to:
Repentance.
Sometimes it exposes:
Injustice.
Sometimes it announces:
Judgment.
Sometimes it offers:
Hope.
The prophet's defining task is not guessing what happens next.
It is faithfully speaking what God has:
Given.

9. The Witnesses Speak During the Trampling

Now place Verse 2 beside Verse: 3
Forty-two months of:
Trampling.
1,260 days of:
Prophesying.
Using the conventional thirty-day month, those periods:
Correspond.
That means the witnesses are not waiting for the trampling to:
End.
They speak while it is:
Happening.
That is crucial.
The period of opposition is simultaneously the period of:
Witness.
Darkness and testimony occupy the same:
Time.

10. God Does Not Surrender the Field

The nations may trample the holy:
City.
But God does not abandon the:
Field.

He raises:
Witnesses.
That is one of the great patterns of:
Scripture.
When Pharaoh oppressed Israel—
God raised:
Moses.
When Ahab and Jezebel promoted idolatry—
God raised:
Elijah.
When kingdoms turned from God—
God raised the:
Prophets.
When the world crucified Christ—
God raised Him from the:
Dead.
And when the nations trample in Revelation 11—
God has:
Witnesses.
Darkness never catches God without a:
Voice.

11. One Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Days

John gives us another precise:
Number.
1,260:
Days.
And once again we should notice the precision without pretending it tells us more than it:
Does.
The period corresponds to the forty-two months of Verse: 2
Later Revelation will continue using this three-and-a-half pattern in different:
Forms.
The pattern matters.
Its biblical background matters.
Its connection with Daniel matters.
But we do not need to turn John's vision into a:
Calendar.
The point immediately before us is simpler.
The period of witness has been:
Measured.

12. The Witness Has a Beginning and an End

Just as the trampling has a limit—
so does the particular commission of the:

Witnesses.
Their ministry lasts:
1,260 days.
There is something reassuring about:
That.
Their mission is not vague.
It is not accidental.
It is not endless.
God knows when their testimony:
Begins.
God knows when their testimony is:
Finished.
And that becomes enormously important when we eventually reach Verse: 7
The beast will attack them—
when they have finished their testimony.
Not:
Before.

13. Their Mission Cannot Be Interrupted Before It Is Finished

We should not run too far ahead.
But Verse 7 casts a helpful light backward upon Verse: 3
God grants them authority to prophesy for a defined:
Period.
Later the beast attacks when their testimony is:
Finished.
That tells us something profound.
The beast may kill the:
Witnesses.
But the beast cannot cancel the:
Witness.
Their lives can be attacked.
Their completed testimony cannot be:
Undone.
What looks like the victory of evil comes only after God has accomplished what He intended through their:
Witness.

14. "Wearing Sackcloth"

Then John tells us how they are:
Dressed.
Sackcloth.
Not royal robes.
Not ceremonial splendor.
Not clothing designed to communicate:

Success.
Sackcloth.
Throughout Scripture, sackcloth is associated with:
Mourning.
Grief.
Humility.
Repentance.
The clothing matches the seriousness of their:
Message.
These witnesses do not celebrate the brokenness of the world they:
Address.
They grieve over:
It.

15. Prophetic Witness Should Carry Grief

There is an important lesson:
Here.
It is possible to speak about judgment with entirely the wrong:
Spirit.
Some people seem almost delighted by the prospect of other people being proven:
Wrong.
The witnesses of Revelation 11 wear:
Sackcloth.
Their appearance does not communicate:
Gloating.
It communicates:
Grief.
Faithful witness can be bold without becoming:
Cruel.
Truth can be spoken clearly without being spoken:
Proudly.
A message of judgment should never cause the messenger to rejoice in another person's:
Destruction.

16. Sackcloth Keeps the Messenger Humble

The witnesses possess divine:
Authority.
That could become dangerous if authority were confused with personal:
Importance.
But they wear:
Sackcloth.
Authority and humility stand:
Together.

They speak for God.
But they are not:
God.
They carry the message.
But the message does not originate with:
Them.
They have authority.
But they remain:
Servants.
Perhaps sackcloth is exactly the right clothing for anyone entrusted with a powerful:
Word.

17. Witness Is Both Word and Life

The witnesses do not merely:
Speak.
Their appearance itself becomes part of the:
Witness.
Their clothing communicates something about the message they:
Carry.
That reminds us that Christian witness is never entirely separated from the life of the:
Witness.
What we say matters.
How we live while saying it matters:
Too.
A message of humility carried by arrogance becomes difficult to:
Hear.
A message of grace carried without grace becomes:
Contradictory.
The life of the messenger should not deny the message of the:
Messenger.

18. The World May Trample—But God Still Speaks

Put the two verses together one more:
Time.
The nations:
Trample.
God's witnesses:
Prophesy.
The world exerts power.
God grants:
Authority.
The nations occupy the holy city.
The witnesses wear:

Sackcloth.
Nothing about the situation looks outwardly:
Triumphant.
Yet God's Word continues to be:
Spoken.
That may be one of the deepest lessons in this entire:
Chapter.
God's faithfulness is not measured by how quiet the opposition:
Becomes.
Sometimes God's faithfulness is revealed by the fact that His witness continues while the opposition is still:
Loud.

19. Faithful Witness Does Not Require Favorable Conditions

We often imagine what we could accomplish if circumstances were:
Better.
If people were more receptive.
If culture were more sympathetic.
If opposition were less severe.
If the timing were more:
Convenient.
Revelation 11 gives us witnesses who prophesy during the:
Trampling.
They do not receive ideal:
Conditions.
They receive divine:
Authority.
Perhaps we sometimes ask God to change the environment when He is calling us to remain faithful within:
It.

20. The Witness Belongs to God

And that brings us back to two simple words:
“My witnesses.”
That may be enough to carry them through everything that:
Follows.
They belong to:
God.
Their authority comes from:
God.
Their message comes from:
God.
Their period of witness is known by:
God.

Their suffering will not surprise:
God.
Their apparent defeat will not defeat the purposes of:
God.
Before they ever stand against the world—
they stand as witnesses belonging to:
Him.

Pastoral Reflection

There are times when we assume faithful witness requires favorable:
Circumstances.
We wait for the right moment.
The right audience.
The right environment.
The right opportunity.
And sometimes wisdom certainly requires us to consider when and how we:
Speak.
But Revelation 11 reminds us that God's witnesses are often called precisely when circumstances are:
Difficult.
The nations are trampling.
And the witnesses are:
Prophesying.
At the same:
Time.
God does not promise them popularity.
He gives them:
Authority.
He does not dress them in royal robes.
They wear:
Sackcloth.
Their witness carries humility.
Grief.
Seriousness.
And courage.
Perhaps that is what faithful Christian witness should still look like.
Not angry people delighted to tell the world how wrong it:
Is.
But people who love God enough to speak truth—
and love people enough to grieve over the brokenness that makes the truth necessary.

Something Worth Pondering

The trampling lasts:
Forty-two months.

The witnessing lasts:
1,260 days.
The same darkness that creates the need for endurance creates the setting for:
Witness.
Perhaps we should stop assuming difficult times mean the Church has fewer opportunities to:
Speak.
Sometimes darkness makes faithful witness more:
Visible.
The world may control many things.
But it cannot silence a witness whom God has commissioned to:
Speak.

Ask Yourself This:

Do I think faithful witness requires favorable circumstances?
When I speak difficult truth, does my attitude resemble sackcloth—humble, grieving, and serious—or does it resemble pride?
And if God has given me an opportunity to bear witness today, am I using it faithfully while I still have it?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:4

“These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”
— Revelation 11:4, KJV

Now John gives us another description of the:
The KJV names two olive trees and two “candlesticks.” The lampstand imagery carries us back into Scripture.
Two olive:
Trees.
Two:
Lampstands.
And they stand before:
The Lord of the earth.
The imagery is not:
Random.
John reaches backward into the prophetic world of:
Zechariah.
But he also reaches backward within his own:
Revelation.
We have seen lampstands:
Before.
So before we rush to give these witnesses:
Names—
John gives us:
Images.
Images of provision.
Images of light.
Images of witness.
And above everything else—
an image of where they:
Stand.
Before:
The Lord.

1. “These Are”

John speaks with:
Certainty.
“These are...”
He is interpreting the vision for:
Us.
The two witnesses are described as:

Two olive trees.
And:
Two candlesticks, or lampstands.
John does not say:
“They remind me of.”
He gives us a direct symbolic:
Identification.
That means our first task is not to invent additional symbolism.
It is to understand the symbolism John has actually:
Given.

2. Two Olive Trees

The first image is:
Olive trees.
For John's biblically informed readers, that image would naturally call to mind the prophet:
Zechariah.
In Zechariah 4, the prophet sees a lampstand accompanied by two olive:
Trees.
The imagery belongs to a vision about God's provision, God's Spirit, and those who stand before the Lord.
John draws directly from that prophetic:
World.
The witnesses of Revelation 11 do not appear without biblical:
Roots.
They stand within the continuing story of God's prophetic:
Witness.

3. Zechariah Helps Us—but Does Not Answer Everything

We should allow Zechariah to illuminate:
Revelation.
But we should not assume that every element must transfer with exact one-to-one:
Precision.
John uses earlier biblical imagery and places it within a new:
Vision.
That is something Revelation does repeatedly.
Old Testament images are taken up.
Expanded.
Combined.
And brought into the testimony concerning:
Christ.
So Zechariah gives us essential:
Background.

But Revelation 11 must still be allowed to speak in its own:
Voice.

4. The Olive Trees Suggest Provision

In Zechariah's vision, the olive trees are connected with the supply associated with the:
Lampstand.
The image suggests continuing:
Provision.
The light does not depend merely upon human:
Resources.
That fits beautifully with the witnesses of Revelation: 11
Their ministry occurs during:
Trampling.
Their circumstances are hostile.
Their message is unpopular.
Yet they continue to:
Prophesy.
Why?
Because the strength for their witness does not originate in the:
World.
God supplies what God's witnesses need to accomplish what God has called them to:
Do.

5. “Not by Might”

Zechariah's vision contains one of Scripture's great declarations:
“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit.”
That truth stands naturally behind the imagery John is:
Using.
The witnesses of Revelation 11 will display extraordinary:
Authority.
But their mission is not sustained by ordinary human:
Power.
Not military strength.
Not political influence.
Not cultural dominance.
Not personal:
Prestige.
Faithful witness ultimately depends upon:
God.
That was true in Zechariah's day.
It remains true in:
John's.

6. Two Candlesticks

Then John adds a second:
Image.
The witnesses are also:
“the two candlesticks.”
And now Revelation itself gives us important:
Background.
We have seen lampstands:
Before.
At the beginning of the book, John was told plainly that the seven lampstands represented the seven:
Churches.
That does not automatically prove that the two witnesses are simply another name for the entire:
Church.
We should not move faster than the:
Text.
But neither should we ignore John's established:
Vocabulary.
Lampstands have already been connected with:
Churches.
That matters.

7. Lampstands Exist to Bear Light

A lampstand does not create the:
Light.
It bears:
It.
That is a beautiful picture of faithful:
Witness.
The witnesses are not the source of the truth they:
Proclaim.
They carry it.
They display it.
They hold it before a darkened:
World.
The light does not originate with the:
Lampstand.
And the message does not originate with the:
Messenger.
Both are entrusted with something they are called to:
Bear.

8. The Witness Must Not Confuse Itself With the Light

That distinction matters.

The Church is not:
Christ.
The witness is not:
The message.
The preacher is not:
The Word.
The lampstand exists to hold the:
Light.
Whenever the lampstand begins drawing attention primarily to:
Itself—
something has gone:
Wrong.
Faithful witness does not say:
Look at us.
Faithful witness says:
Look toward the One whose light we have been given to:
Bear.

9. Olive Trees and Lampstands Together

John does something interesting.
He calls the same witnesses:
Olive trees.
And:
Lampstands.
Provision and:
Witness.
Supply and:
Light.
What God provides—
the witnesses:
Display.
What comes from God—
moves through the witnesses toward the:
World.
That fits the pattern we just encountered in Chapter: 10
Receive.
Then:
Speak.
The witness cannot faithfully give what it has never:
Received.

10. Why Two Lampstands?

Again the number:
Two.
Verse 3 introduced:

Two witnesses.
Verse 4 gives us:
Two olive trees.
Two lampstands.
The imagery reinforces the idea of established, sufficient:
Testimony.
But we should be cautious about forcing every detail into a rigid symbolic:
Equation.
John's emphasis remains upon:
Witness.
Two witnesses stand.
Two olive trees supply the imagery.
Two lampstands bear the:
Light.
The testimony is established.

11. Does This Mean the Witnesses Are Churches?

This is where interpretation becomes:
Interesting.
Because Revelation 1 explicitly identifies lampstands with churches, many interpreters understand the two witnesses symbolically as representing the witnessing:
Church.
That interpretation has genuine textual support and deserves serious:
Attention.
Others understand the witnesses as two particular individuals while seeing the lampstand imagery as describing their prophetic:
Function.
Still others combine aspects of these:
Views.
What should we do?
Notice the evidence.
Respect the interpretations.
And refuse to pretend John has said more than he:
Has.
Lampstands have represented churches in Revelation.
That is:
Significant.
But Verse 4 still does not give these witnesses:
Names.

12. The Text Gives Us Function More Clearly Than Identity

This may be one of our most useful interpretive:
Guardrails.

John gives us much more information about what the witnesses:
Do—
than precisely who they:
Are.
They prophesy.
They bear witness.
They stand before God.
They exercise God-given authority.
They face opposition.
They eventually suffer.
And God vindicates:
Them.
Perhaps Revelation wants us to focus primarily upon faithful:
Witness—
rather than winning the argument over the witnesses':
Identity.

13. “Standing”

Then comes a simple but powerful:
Verb.
They:
Stand.
They stand before the Lord of the:
Earth.
That posture communicates:
Readiness.
Service.
Attendance.
They are positioned before the One whose authority they:
Represent.
Before they stand against the world—
they stand before:
God.
That order matters.

14. The Witnesses Know Before Whom They Stand

The world may become:
Hostile.
The nations may:
Trample.
Enemies may attempt to harm:
Them.
Eventually the beast will wage war against:
Them.
But none of those opponents occupy the witnesses' ultimate field of:

Vision.
They stand before:
The Lord.
That is where courage begins.
Faithful witness becomes possible when we remember before whom we ultimately:
Stand.

15. “The God of the Earth”

John does not merely say:
Lord.
He says:
“The Lord of the earth.”
That title matters in a chapter where the nations appear to exercise tremendous:
Power.
Who actually owns the:
Earth?
Not the nations.
Not the kings.
Not the beast.
Not the inhabitants who will eventually celebrate the witnesses':
Death.
The Lord.
The witnesses stand before the true sovereign of the very earth upon which their enemies appear to:
Rule.

16. Apparent Power and Ultimate Authority Are Not the Same

Revelation continually forces us to distinguish between:
Appearance—
and:
Reality.
The nations appear powerful.
The witnesses appear vulnerable.
The world appears to control the:
Stage.
But John changes our perspective.
The witnesses stand before:
The Lord of the earth.
The world's power may be visible.

God's sovereignty is:
Ultimate.
And those are not the same:
Thing.

17. The Witnesses Are Not Standing Alone

There is something deeply pastoral in the:
Image.
The witnesses may appear to stand against enormous:
Opposition.
But they do not stand:
Alone.
They stand before:
God.
That does not mean they will avoid:
Suffering.
The chapter will make that unmistakably:
Clear.
But it means their witness takes place in the presence of the One who called:
Them.
The world may see two witnesses standing against:
Many.
Heaven sees two witnesses standing before:
God.

18. Standing Before God Comes Before Standing Before the World

Perhaps there is a lesson here for every Christian:
Witness.
Before we speak to the:
World—
we should stand before:
God.
Before we try to represent:
Christ—
we should remain close to:
Christ.
Before we carry the:
Word—
we must receive the:
Word.
Otherwise witness becomes performance.
Argument.
Noise.
Or self-promotion.

The strength of faithful witness begins not with how confidently we stand before people—
but with how faithfully we stand before:
God.

19. The Source Determines the Strength of the Witness

Olive trees.
Lampstands.
Standing before the:
Lord.
Every image points away from self-sufficient:
Witness.
The witnesses receive authority.
They receive provision.
They bear light.
They stand before:
God.
Nothing about their calling is:
Self-generated.
That may be why they can continue when circumstances become:
Hostile.
Their strength is not dependent upon whether the world approves of:
Them.
Their source lies somewhere the world cannot:
Reach.

20. Before We Ask Who They Are

Perhaps Verse 4 invites us to rearrange our:
Questions.
Our instinct is:
Who are the Two Witnesses?
John seems more interested in:
Whose are they?
What do they do?
Where do they stand?
They belong to:
God.
They bear:
Witness.
They stand before:
The Lord of the earth.
Perhaps if we understand those things, we already understand the most important things John wants us to:
Know.

Pastoral Reflection

There are times when Christian witness can feel painfully:
Small.
One person.
One congregation.
One conversation.
One act of faithfulness in a world that seems much:
Larger.
Revelation 11 gives us another way to see:
It.
The witnesses are:
Lampstands.
They do not have to create the:
Light.
They only have to bear:
It.
They are olive trees.
Their strength does not depend entirely upon their own:
Resources.
They stand before the Lord of the:
Earth.
Their authority does not depend upon the world's:
Approval.
That changes the question.
Instead of asking:
Am I powerful enough?
Perhaps we should ask:
Am I standing before the One who is?
Instead of asking:
Can I create enough light?
Perhaps we should ask:
Am I faithfully bearing the light I have received?
The lampstand does not need to become the:
Sun.
It simply needs to hold the: Light.

Something Worth Pondering

The nations are:
Trampling.
The witnesses are:
Standing.
That contrast is worth remembering.
The world moves.
Threatens.

Pressures.
Opposes.
But the witnesses:
Stand.
Not because they are stronger than everyone around:
Them.
Because they know before whom they:
Stand.
Sometimes endurance is not dramatic.
Sometimes endurance simply means:
Still standing.
Still faithful.
Still bearing the light.
Still speaking the Word.
Still standing before:
God.

Ask Yourself This:

Am I trying to create spiritual strength from my own resources, or receiving what God supplies?
Does my witness draw attention primarily to me—or to the Light I have been given to bear?
And when opposition comes, do I remember that before I stand before anyone else, I stand before the Lord of the earth?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:5

“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.”
— Revelation 11:5, KJV

Verse 4 showed us where the witnesses:
Stand.
Before the Lord of the:
Earth.
Verse 5 shows us what happens when someone attempts to:
Harm them.
Fire.
It pours from their:
Mouth.
And consumes their:
Foes.
The imagery is dramatic.
Severe.
Even:
Disturbing.
And because Revelation gives us such a vivid picture, it would be easy to become fascinated by the mechanics of the:
Fire.
Is it literal?
Symbolic?
Prophetic?
Supernatural?
Before asking those questions, perhaps we should notice something more:
Important.
The fire comes from the same place their testimony:
Comes from.
Their:
Mouth.
These are witnesses.
They have been commissioned to:
Speak.
And until that testimony is finished, those who attempt to silence them discover that the Word they carry is not:
Powerless.

1. “And If Anyone”

The verse begins with a:
Condition.
“If anyone...”
Opposition is anticipated.
That should not surprise us.
The witnesses are prophesying during the same period in which the holy city is being:
Trampled.
Their message is delivered in hostile:
Territory.
Faithful witness will attract:
Resistance.
The question is not whether someone will dislike what they:
Say.
The question becomes what happens when opposition turns into an attempt to:
Harm them.

2. “Wants to Harm Them”

John repeats this idea:
Twice.
“And if any man will hurt them...”
And:
“And if any man will hurt them...”
The repetition places emphasis upon deliberate:
Hostility.
These are not people merely disagreeing with the:
Witnesses.
They want to:
Harm them.
That distinction matters.
Revelation does not portray every disagreement as:
Persecution.
The issue here is intentional opposition seeking to destroy God's:
Messengers.

3. Witness Does Not Guarantee Acceptance

Sometimes we imagine that if truth is presented clearly enough, lovingly enough, and faithfully enough, everyone will eventually:
Accept it.
Scripture gives us no such:
Promise.
The prophets spoke faithfully.
They were:

Rejected.
Jesus spoke perfectly.
He was:
Crucified.
The apostles proclaimed the gospel.
They encountered:
Opposition.
The two witnesses speak with authority granted by:
God.
And people still want to:
Harm them.
The rejection of a message does not necessarily mean the messenger has been:
Unfaithful.

4. “Fire Proceedeth out of Their Mouth”

Then comes the unforgettable:
Image.
Fire pours from their:
Mouth.
John does not say from their:
Hands.
Not from a weapon they:
Carry.
From their:
Mouth.
That location should make us:
Think.
Their mouths are the instruments of their prophetic:
Witness.
They have been granted authority to:
Prophesy.
Now the mouth from which testimony proceeds is also associated with:
Judgment.
Word and judgment stand closely:
Together.

5. Jeremiah Gives Us an Important Echo

The imagery of a prophetic word becoming fire is not unique to:
Revelation.
Jeremiah was told that because the people had spoken against God, God's words in the prophet's mouth would become:
Fire.
And the people would be like:
Wood.

The image is strikingly similar.
The prophet speaks.
The Word carries divine:
Judgment.
John's witnesses stand within that same prophetic:
Tradition.
Their mouths are dangerous not because their personalities are powerful—
but because God's Word is not:
Empty.

6. Elijah Is Also in the Background

Another biblical figure naturally comes to:
Mind.
Elijah.
When soldiers were sent against him, fire came down from heaven and consumed those who had come to seize:
Him.
That connection will become even stronger in Verse: 6
There the witnesses will exercise authority associated with both Elijah and:
Moses.
John is surrounding these witnesses with imagery drawn from some of Israel's greatest prophetic:
Traditions.
But again—
an echo is not the same thing as an:
Identification.

7. Echoes Are Not Name Tags

This is where we keep our familiar:
Guardrail.
Because the witnesses resemble Elijah in some ways does not automatically mean one witness:
Is Elijah.
Because they will resemble Moses in other ways does not automatically mean the other witness:
Is Moses.
Perhaps they are.
Perhaps John intends something broader.
Perhaps the imagery is describing the prophetic character of their:
Ministry.
Verse 5 does not settle that:
Question.
So neither will:
We.
When Scripture stops speaking, we stop speaking too.

8. The Fire May Be More Than One Thing

Interpreters have understood the fire in different:
Ways.
Some understand an actual supernatural judgment.
Others understand the fire symbolically as the judging power of the prophetic:
Word.
Jeremiah's imagery certainly makes the second possibility:
Plausible.
Revelation's visionary character cautions us against demanding ordinary physical explanations for every:
Image.
But John does not stop to explain the mechanism.
Perhaps that is because the mechanism is not his primary:
Concern.
The message is clear enough:
God's witnesses cannot simply be silenced at will.

9. The Word They Speak Has Consequences

We sometimes treat words as though they are:
Harmless.
Just sounds.
Just sentences.
Just:
Opinions.
Not the Word of:
God.
When God speaks judgment, the Word itself carries:
Authority.
The witnesses do not merely provide information.
Their testimony confronts the world with the claims of:
God.
To reject that testimony is not merely to dislike two:
Preachers.
It is to resist the One whose authority they:
Carry.

10. “Devoureth Their Enemies”

John describes those attempting to harm the witnesses as their:
Foes.
The fire consumes:
Them.
This is judgment language.
And it should make us:
Uncomfortable.

Judgment should never become entertainment for the:
Church.
Revelation does not give us these scenes so Christians can delight in imagining enemies being:
Destroyed.
Remember how the witnesses are dressed.
Sackcloth.
They carry their message in the posture of:
Mourning.
The same witnesses associated with judgment are dressed in the clothing of:
Grief.

11. Sackcloth and Fire Belong Together

That combination is important.
Fire without sackcloth could become:
Vengeance.
Sackcloth without truth could become mere:
Sentiment.
The witnesses carry:
Both.
They grieve.
And they speak.
They mourn.
And they refuse to soften what God has given them to:
Say.
Faithful witness does not choose between truth and:
Compassion.
It carries truth with a heart that understands why judgment is:
Tragic.

12. This Is Not Personal Revenge

Nothing in the passage suggests the witnesses are settling personal:
Scores.
They have been commissioned by:
God.
Their authority has been:
Granted.
Their mission is prophetic.
Their judgment belongs within that divine:
Commission.
That distinction matters enormously.
Revelation 11 is not permission for Christians to retaliate against people who mistreat:
Them.
Jesus taught His followers to love their:

Enemies.
The apostles taught believers not to repay evil for:
Evil.
The authority of these witnesses belongs to their particular role within John's:
Vision.
We should not turn apocalyptic imagery into authorization for personal:
Vengeance.

13. “Must in This Manner Be Killed”

John repeats the warning with even greater:
Force.
Anyone who wants to harm them “must be killed in this:
Manner.”
The language communicates:
Certainty.
During their appointed witness, opposition cannot simply remove them from the:
Scene.
Their enemies may desire their:
Death.
But desire is not the same as:
Authority.
God has established the boundaries of their:
Mission.

14. The Witnesses Are Protected for a Purpose

This is not protection merely for the sake of personal:
Comfort.
They are protected because they have a testimony to:
Complete.
God has granted them 1,260 days to:
Prophesy.
Their preservation serves their:
Mission.
That becomes especially clear when we reach Verse: 7
There John will say:
“And when they shall have finished their testimony...”
Only then does the next stage:
Begin.
Their protection has a:
Purpose.

15. Until the Testimony Is Finished

This may be the pastoral center of the:
Verse.

Their enemies cannot end the witnesses' mission before God says the mission is:
Finished.
That does not mean the witnesses are immortal.
Verse 7 will prove they are:
Not.
It means their lives are held within the purposes of:
God.
There is a difference.
God's protection does not mean they will never:
Die.
It means opposition does not determine when their testimony is:
Complete.

16. Protection and Suffering Are Not Contradictions

Verse 5 protects the:
Witnesses.
Verse 7 will show them being:
Killed.
At first those statements might appear:
Contradictory.
They are not.
Protection in Revelation is not always endless physical:
Preservation.
Sometimes God preserves His servants until their work is:
Done.
Then even death cannot undo what God has accomplished through:
Them.
That is a much deeper understanding of:
Security.

17. The Enemy Cannot Rewrite the Assignment

God has given the witnesses a:
Task.
Prophesy for 1,260:
Days.
Their enemies cannot shorten God's assignment simply because they dislike the:
Message.
They can oppose.
Threaten.
Attempt to:
Harm.
But they cannot rewrite the commission God has:
Given.

The mission belongs to:
God.
So does its completion.

18. There Is Courage in Knowing Who Holds the Assignment

Imagine what this means for the:
Witnesses.
Their courage does not have to come from believing nothing bad will ever happen to:
Them.
Eventually something bad:
Will.
Their courage comes from knowing that their lives and their mission rest in hands larger than those of their:
Enemies.
That is a different kind of:
Courage.
Not:
Nothing can happen to me.
But:
Nothing can happen outside the purposes of God.

19. The Mouth the World Wants Silenced Keeps Speaking

The location of the fire continues to:
Matter.
The mouth.
The very thing the enemy would like to:
Silence.
The witnesses have been sent to:
Speak.
And the attempted silencing becomes the occasion for judgment proceeding from the same:
Place.
There is something almost poetic in John's:
Image.
The world tries to silence the prophetic mouth.
But the prophetic mouth remains:
Powerful.

20. The Witness Is Not Defenseless

Verse 4 showed us two apparently humble:
Witnesses.
Olive trees.

Lampstands.
Standing before:
God.
Verse 5 reminds us not to confuse humility with:
Powerlessness.
They wear sackcloth.
But they carry divine:
Authority.
They mourn.
But they are not:
Defenseless.
They stand before the Lord of the earth.
And until their testimony is finished—
no enemy gets the final:
Word.

Pastoral Reflection

Most of us will never experience anything resembling the dramatic scene John describes:
Here.
We are not the Two Witnesses of Revelation: 11
And we have not been commissioned to call fire upon those who oppose:
Us.
But there is still something deeply reassuring in this:
Vision.
God's servants do not belong to their:
Enemies.
They belong to:
God.
Their lives do not become meaningless simply because opposition becomes:
Strong.
Their mission does not become invalid because people reject their:
Message.
And the purposes of God are not defeated merely because God's servants eventually:
Suffer.
Sometimes we pray:
“Lord, keep anything bad from happening to me.”
Perhaps a deeper prayer is:
“Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.”
The witnesses of Revelation 11 are not promised endless earthly:
Safety.
They are given something better.
Their testimony will be:

Completed.

Something Worth Pondering

Verse 5 says their enemies cannot destroy:
Them.
Verse 7 will say the beast does:
Kill them.
The difference is not a contradiction.
The difference is:
Timing.
The beast may kill the witnesses. But the beast cannot cancel the witness.
Their enemies cannot end their testimony before God declares it:
Finished.
Perhaps that changes how we think about divine:
Protection.
God's protection does not always mean nothing painful will happen.
Sometimes it means nothing can prevent God's purpose from being:
Completed.

Ask Yourself This:

Do I confuse God's protection with a promise that nothing painful can happen to me?
When people reject truth, am I tempted toward anger and retaliation—or can I continue speaking truth with the spirit of sackcloth?
And would I be willing to pray not merely for safety, but for faithfulness until whatever God has given me to do is finished?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:6

“These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.”
— Revelation 11:6, KJV

If Verse 5 reminded us of:
Elijah—
Verse 6 makes the echo even:
Stronger.
The witnesses have authority to shut the:
Sky.
No rain falls during the days of their:
Prophesying.
Then another familiar biblical story enters the:
Picture.
Water becomes:
Blood.
The earth is struck with:
Plagues.
Now we hear echoes of:
Moses.
Elijah.
Moses.
Two of the great prophetic figures of Israel's:
Story.
And immediately the temptation becomes almost:
Irresistible.
There they are!
The Two Witnesses must be:
Moses and Elijah.
Perhaps.
But John still has not said:
That.
He has told us what authority the witnesses:
Exercise.
He has shown us the biblical tradition within which their ministry should be:
Understood.
But he still has not given us their:
Names.
And so we will continue to let John tell us what he wants us to:
Know.

1. “These Have Power”

Once again John emphasizes:
Authority.
Not merely:
Power.
Authority.
The distinction matters.
Power describes the ability to do:
Something.
Authority describes the right under which it is:
Done.
The witnesses do not simply possess extraordinary:
Abilities.
Their ministry operates under authority granted by:
God.
Verse 3 established that from the:
Beginning.
“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy.”
Everything that follows flows from that divine:
Commission.

2. Their Authority Is Delegated

The witnesses do not own the authority they:
Exercise.
They receive:
It.
That keeps us from imagining them as independent supernatural:
Figures.
They remain:
Servants.
Their power does not make them sovereign.
Their authority does not make them:
God.
They stand before the Lord of the:
Earth.
And everything they do must be understood beneath His greater:
Authority.
The witnesses are powerful because the One who sends them is:
Powerful.

3. Authority to Shut the Sky

John says:
“These have power to shut heaven.”
The result is:
No rain.

And anyone familiar with Israel's prophetic history immediately hears the story of:
Elijah.
During the reign of Ahab, Elijah announced that rain would cease.
And it:
Did.
The drought became both judgment and a confrontation with Israel's:
Idolatry.
John's imagery deliberately places the witnesses within that prophetic:
Tradition.

4. “In the Days of Their Prophecy”

Notice how John connects the drought with their:
Mission.
No rain falls:
“in the days of their prophecy.”
Again the emphasis returns to:
Witness.
Their extraordinary authority is not given for:
Entertainment.
Not for spectacle.
Not to establish celebrity.
It belongs to their prophetic:
Mission.
Everything keeps returning to the same:
Center.
They have been sent to:
Speak.

5. The Sign Serves the Word

That relationship matters throughout:
Scripture.
Signs are never meant merely to make people say:
Wow.
They point beyond:
Themselves.
Moses' signs accompanied God's demand that Pharaoh release His:
People.
Elijah's ministry confronted Israel's idolatry and called the people back to:
God.
The extraordinary acts served the prophetic:
Word.
So too in Revelation: 11
The witnesses are not performers.
They are:

Prophets.

6. Elijah Is Clearly Echoing Here

We do not need to pretend the Elijah connection is:
Subtle.
It is not.
Shutting the heavens so that rain does not fall is one of the defining signs associated with Elijah's:
Ministry.
And Verse 5 had already reminded us of fire associated with Elijah's:
Story.
John clearly wants that prophetic tradition in our:
Minds.
But remembering Elijah is different from declaring:
This witness is Elijah.
One is observation.
The other is:
Identification.
John gives us the first.
He does not explicitly give us the:
Second.

7. Then the Image Shifts Toward Moses

The witnesses also have authority:
“over waters to turn them to blood.”
Now another biblical figure immediately comes into:
View.
Moses.
The first plague upon Egypt turned the waters of the Nile into:
Blood.
And John does not stop:
There.
The witnesses may also:
“smite the earth with all plagues.”
The Exodus imagery becomes unmistakable.

8. Moses and the Plagues

The Exodus was one of Israel's defining experiences of divine:
Deliverance.
God confronted:
Pharaoh.
God exposed the impotence of Egypt's:
Gods.
God judged the oppressor.
God delivered His:
People.

And the plagues became signs of God's sovereign authority over a ruler who imagined himself:
Untouchable.
That makes Exodus imagery especially appropriate in:
Revelation.
Revelation also portrays a world of arrogant powers claiming authority that ultimately belongs to:
God.

9. Revelation Has Already Been Echoing Exodus

This is not the first time we have heard the language of:
Egypt.
The trumpet judgments have already reminded us repeatedly of the:
Plagues.
Water affected.
Darkness.
Destruction.
Blood.
Revelation draws upon the Exodus story because Exodus provides a biblical pattern of:
Bondage.
Judgment.
Deliverance.
And worship.
The God who delivered His people before remains the God who will finally deliver His people:
Again.

10. Moses and Elijah Together

Now we can understand why so many interpreters identify the witnesses as:
Moses and Elijah.
One shuts the:
Sky.
The other turns water into:
Blood.
Elijah.
Moses.
The correspondence is:
Powerful.
And it deserves to be taken:
Seriously.
But correspondence is not the same as:
Identification.
John could have written:
“These are Moses and Elijah.”

He did:
Not.
So we should not place our certainty where John has left:
Mystery.

11. Biblical Echoes Can Describe a Calling

There is another possibility we should keep:
Open.
Perhaps John is not telling us who the witnesses are by these:
Images.
Perhaps he is telling us what kind of prophetic ministry they:
Represent.
They stand in the tradition of:
Moses.
They stand in the tradition of:
Elijah.
They confront rebellious powers.
They speak God's Word.
They announce judgment.
They call the world to reckon with the authority of:
God.
The imagery may identify their prophetic character more clearly than their personal:
Names.

12. The Two Great Prophetic Traditions

Moses and Elijah occupy extraordinary places within the biblical:
Story.
Moses is associated with the:
Law.
Elijah became representative of the:
Prophets.
And Christians cannot hear those two names together without remembering another:
Scene.
A mountain.
Jesus transfigured.
And standing with Him:
Moses and Elijah.
That does not prove their identity in Revelation: 11
But it certainly reminds us how deeply those two figures represent the prophetic witness of: Scripture.

13. Christ Remains Greater Than the Witnesses

That reminder is important.

Even if Moses and Elijah stand behind the imagery, Revelation is not redirecting our attention away from:
Christ.
The witnesses serve:
Christ.
The prophets point toward:
Christ.
The testimony belongs ultimately to:
Jesus.
Revelation began by calling itself:
“The revelation of Jesus Christ.”
Every faithful witness in the book remains subordinate to:
Him.
The servants never become the center of the:
Story.

14. Authority Over the Waters

John says the witnesses have authority:
“over the waters.”
Again the language of authority:
Returns.
The natural world itself falls within the scope of God's:
Sovereignty.
Sky.
Rain.
Water.
Earth.
The powers opposing God may imagine that they control the:
World.
But the signs surrounding the witnesses declare otherwise.
Creation belongs to:
God.
The Lord before whom the witnesses stand really is:
“The Lord of the earth.”

15. “All Plagues”

Then the language becomes extremely:
Broad.
“Every kind of plague.”
John does not provide a:
List.
And we should resist the temptation to create:
One.
The point is not to catalog hypothetical future:
Disasters.

The point is the extraordinary scope of the authority entrusted to these:
Witnesses.
The language of Exodus has been expanded.
Their prophetic ministry carries the weight of divine:
Judgment.

16. “As Often as They Will”

Then comes perhaps the most startling phrase in the:
Verse.
“As often as they will.”
At first reading, that can sound almost:
Unrestrained.
Do these witnesses simply decide whenever they feel like striking the earth with:
Plagues?
That would sit strangely beside everything John has already told us about:
Them.
They stand before:
God.
Their authority is:
Granted.
Their ministry is:
Commissioned.
Their testimony belongs within a period God has:
Determined.
Their desire cannot reasonably be separated from the divine commission under which they:
Serve.

17. Authority Requires Alignment

The witnesses possess remarkable freedom within their:
Calling.
But faithful authority is never independence from:
God.
It is alignment with:
God.
The mature servant does not ask:
What can I get away with doing?
The mature servant asks:
What serves the purpose for which I was sent?
Authority becomes dangerous whenever it is separated from:
Obedience.
The witnesses' power is trustworthy only because their ministry remains rooted in the One before whom they:
Stand.

18. Power Is Not the Point

Verses 5 and 6 contain enough supernatural power to capture anyone's:
Attention.
Fire.
Drought.
Blood.
Plagues.
But if we focus only on those things, we may miss John's repeated:
Emphasis.
They are:
Witnesses.
They:
Prophesy.
The power serves the:
Witness.
The signs serve the:
Word.
The judgment serves the purposes of:
God.
Power is present.
But power is not the:
Point.

19. The World Cannot Dismiss Their Testimony as Powerless

The nations may despise their:
Message.
But they cannot dismiss it as:
Meaningless.
The witnesses speak with heaven's:
Authority.
Their words confront a world that has resisted:
God.
And the signs surrounding their ministry make visible what their testimony has been:
Declaring.
The God they proclaim is not a powerless religious:
Idea.
He is:
Lord of the earth.

20. The Witnesses Still Wear Sackcloth

Perhaps we should not allow Verse 6 to make us forget Verse: 3
These extraordinarily powerful witnesses are still wearing:

Sackcloth.
That may be one of the most important balances in the:
Passage.
Authority—
and humility.
Power—
and mourning.
Judgment—
and grief.
They can shut the sky.
They can turn water into blood.
They can strike the earth with plagues.
And they wear:
Sackcloth.
Their power has not made them:
Proud.

21. Great Power Should Produce Great Humility

Human beings often respond to power by becoming:
Impressed with themselves.
Biblical servants cannot afford that:
Luxury.
Whatever authority they possess has been:
Given.
Whatever gifts they exercise have been:
Given.
Whatever opportunities they receive have been:
Given.
Whatever fruit comes from their ministry ultimately comes from:
God.
Perhaps the greater the authority entrusted to us—
the more carefully we should remember the:
Sackcloth.

22. God Has Not Lost Control of His Creation

There is one final assurance in this:
Verse.
The witnesses exercise authority over:
Sky.
Rain.
Water.
Earth.
Those are enormous:
Images.
They remind us that the world is not slipping beyond God's:

Reach.
The nations may trample.
The witnesses may be opposed.
The beast will soon appear.
But creation has not changed:
Owners.
The Lord of the earth remains:
Lord.
And His purposes continue moving toward their appointed:
End.

Pastoral Reflection

Most Christians will never be called to shut the:
Sky.
Turn water into:
Blood.
Or strike the earth with:
Plagues.
And that is probably just as well.
Some of us have enough trouble responsibly handling a church committee.
But the deeper lesson of Verse 6 reaches every believer.
Whatever God gives us—
authority.
Influence.
Knowledge.
Opportunity.
Gifts.
Resources.
A voice.
A pulpit.
A classroom.
A conversation.
A place within someone's:
Life—
it has been entrusted to us for a:
Purpose.
The question is not merely:
What am I able to do?
The better question is:
What has God given me this ability to do?
The witnesses possess extraordinary authority.
Yet they remain witnesses.
Their power serves their:
Calling.

And their calling serves:
God.
Perhaps that is the safest way for any of us to hold whatever God places in our:
Hands.
Loosely enough to remember that it came from:
Him.
Faithfully enough to use it for the purpose for which it was:
Given.

Something Worth Pondering

Moses echoes through the:
Plagues.
Elijah echoes through the:
Drought.
But John still calls these figures simply:
"My two witnesses."
Perhaps there is wisdom in leaving them where John leaves:
Them.
We can recognize the echoes without turning them into:
Name tags.
We can appreciate the mystery without needing to:
Solve it.
And we can hear what the vision clearly:
Says.
God equips His witnesses for the work He gives them to:
Do.
Not necessarily for the work they would choose.
Not necessarily for the work others would prefer.
But for the work God has:
Given.
And perhaps the prayer from the previous verse belongs here just as naturally:
Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.

Ask Yourself This:

When God gives me influence, ability, or authority, do I treat it as something I possess—or something He has entrusted to me?

When the Witnesses Rise

Revelation 11:7–14

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.
And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.
The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.”
— Revelation 11:7–14, KJV

For 1,260 days the witnesses have:
Spoken.
They have prophesied.
They have confronted.
They have endured.
They have stood before the Lord of the:
Earth.
And no one has been able to stop:
Them.
But now their testimony is:
Finished.
And everything appears to go:
Wrong.
The beast rises from the bottomless:
Pit.
The witnesses are:
Killed.

Their bodies are left in the:
Street.
The world:
Celebrates.
People exchange:
Gifts.
For three and a half days, it appears that the beast has:
Won.
Then come two of the most important words in the entire:
Passage.
“But after...”
The world has celebrated too:
Soon.
The breath of life from God enters the:
Witnesses.
They stand.
Heaven calls.
They ascend.
Their enemies:
Watch.
And suddenly the story that appeared to demonstrate the defeat of God's witnesses becomes the story of their:
Vindication.
Revelation once again asks us not to determine the outcome while God is still writing the:
Story.

1. The Testimony Is Finished Before the Witnesses Are Killed

John establishes something before describing their:
Death.
They have finished their:
Testimony.
That changes everything that:
Follows.
The beast does not interrupt their:
Mission.
The beast does not silence them before God's purpose has been:
Completed.
Their deaths are real.
Their suffering is real.
But their calling has been:
Fulfilled.
The beast may kill the witnesses.

But the beast cannot cancel the:
Witness.

2. The Beast Appears to Conquer

The beast comes from the bottomless:
Pit.
It makes war upon the:
Witnesses.
It conquers them.
It kills:
Them.
From the world's perspective, the conclusion seems:
Obvious.
The beast has:
Won.
But Revelation has already taught us to be suspicious of victories that are measured only by who remains standing at the end of a:
Battle.
The Lamb conquered by being:
Slain.
Now the witnesses appear conquered because they have been:
Slain.
Perhaps heaven and earth define victory:
Differently.

3. Their Bodies Become a Public Spectacle

The humiliation does not end with:
Death.
Their bodies remain in the street of the great:
City.
They are denied even the dignity of:
Burial.
People from across the nations gaze upon:
Them.
Their enemies want the world to:
See.
The bodies become trophies of apparent:
Victory.
Look.
The prophets are:
Dead.
Their voices are:
Silent.
Their God did not save:
Them.

Or so the world:
Thinks.

4. The Great City Is Described Spiritually

John calls the city:
Sodom.
Egypt.
And the place where their Lord was:
Crucified.
Those descriptions carry enormous biblical:
Weight.
Sodom evokes corruption and:
Judgment.
Egypt evokes oppression and:
Bondage.
The place where the Lord was crucified evokes rejection of God's:
Messiah.
John layers the images together.
The city becomes more than a point on a:
Map.
It becomes a picture of the world in rebellion against:
God.

5. The Servants Follow the Path of Their Lord

John makes a remarkable connection.
Their Lord was:
Crucified.
Now His witnesses are:
Killed.
That is not accidental.
The servants follow the path of the:
Master.
Jesus bore faithful witness.
Jesus was rejected.
Jesus was killed.
Jesus was vindicated.
Now the witnesses follow the same:
Pattern.
Faithful witness in Revelation is shaped by the:
Lamb.

6. Three and a Half Days

Their bodies remain exposed for:
Three and a half days.
Once again the divided-seven pattern appears.
But notice how small this period is compared with their:

Witness.
They prophesied for:
1,260 days.
Their enemies celebrate for:
Three and a half.
That contrast is worth:
Noticing.
The witness was long.
The celebration of its apparent defeat is:
Brief.
Evil's victory has an extraordinarily short:
Shelf life.

7. The World Celebrates Their Death

The inhabitants of the earth do more than feel:
Relieved.
They:
Celebrate.
They gloat.
They exchange:
Presents.
The death of God's witnesses becomes something like a:
Holiday.
That tells us how deeply their testimony had confronted the:
World.
The prophets had become a:
Torment.
Not because John tells us they were cruel.
Not because they were dishonest.
But because faithful truth can become unbearable to people determined not to:
Hear it.

8. Truth Can Torment Those Who Refuse It

There is something sobering in that:
Description.
The witnesses spoke the Word of:
God.
Yet their testimony was experienced as:
Torment.
Truth does not always feel comforting.
Sometimes truth:
Exposes.
Confronts.
Disturbs.

Calls to:
Repentance.
The problem is not always that the truth has been spoken:
Poorly.
Sometimes the problem is that the truth has been:
Heard.
And rejected.

9. The Celebration Comes Too Soon

The inhabitants of the earth exchange:
Gifts.
The witnesses are:
Dead.
The threat appears:
Gone.
The world can finally:
Relax.
Then Verse 11 begins:
“But after...”
Two words overturn the entire:
Celebration.
The world has made a terrible:
Mistake.
It assumed death was the end of the:
Story.
Christians, of all people, should know better than:
That.

10. The Breath of Life Comes From God

The breath of life from God enters the:
Witnesses.
And they:
Stand.
The image echoes one of Scripture's great visions of restoration.
Ezekiel saw the valley of dry:
Bones.
The breath entered.
The dead:
Lived.
John draws again from that biblical world.
Life comes from:
God.
The beast can produce death.
God gives:
Life.

And those powers are not:
Equal.

11. “They Stood on Their Feet”

What an extraordinary:
Sentence.
The bodies that had become trophies of the beast's victory:
Stand.
The prophets the world celebrated killing:
Stand.
The witnesses everyone assumed had been silenced:
Stand.
And suddenly the meaning of the previous three and a half days is completely:
Reversed.
The bodies were supposed to demonstrate the beast's:
Victory.
Now the standing witnesses demonstrate the beast's:
Failure.

12. The Spectators Become Terrified

The world had been:
Celebrating.
Now those who see the witnesses standing are:
Terrified.
How quickly the emotional landscape:
Changes.
Gloating becomes:
Fear.
Celebration becomes:
Terror.
Confidence becomes:
Uncertainty.
Because the world has just discovered that death does not possess the authority it thought it:
Had.
God has spoken another:
Word.

13. “Come Up Hither”

Then a loud voice comes from:
Heaven.
“Come up hither”
The witnesses are:
Called.
They ascend to heaven in a:

Cloud.
The same world that watched their humiliation now watches their:
Vindication.
Their enemies are not allowed to miss:
It.
They watched the bodies.
Now they watch the:
Ascension.
The public shame is answered by public:
Vindication.

14. God Has the Final Word About His Servants

The inhabitants of the earth had rendered their:
Verdict.
The witnesses were:
Defeated.
The beast had:
Won.
Their testimony was:
Finished.
God renders another:
Verdict.
Rise.
Come up:
Here.
And God's verdict is the one that:
Lasts.
Human beings may misunderstand faithful servants.
Reject them.
Mock them.
Condemn them.
But no earthly verdict becomes ultimate merely because many people agree with:
It.
God has the final word.

15. The Earthquake Follows

At that moment comes a great:
Earthquake.
A tenth of the city:
Falls.
Seven thousand people are:
Killed.
The vindication of the witnesses is accompanied by:
Judgment.

The world that celebrated their death is confronted with the reality of the God whose testimony it had:
Rejected.
Again Revelation refuses to make judgment:
Comfortable.
People die.
The scene is:
Serious.
Sin and rebellion have:
Consequences.

16. “The Remnant Were Affrighted”

Those who survive are:
Terrified.
That response makes perfect:
Sense.
They have witnessed resurrection.
Ascension.
Earthquake.
Judgment.
Everything they thought they understood has been:
Overturned.
The witnesses they celebrated killing have been publicly vindicated by:
God.
Fear is an understandable:
Response.
But John tells us something else.

17. They Give Glory to the God of Heaven

The survivors:
“gave glory to the God of heaven.”
That phrase has generated considerable:
Discussion.
Does it indicate genuine repentance?
Or simply terrified acknowledgment of God's:
Power?
John does not explicitly tell us:
Here.
Later Revelation can describe people recognizing God's power without necessarily describing saving:
Faith.
So we should be careful.
They give glory to:
God.
That is what John:

Says.
Whether this represents full repentance is something John does not settle for us in this:
Verse.
And once again:
When Scripture stops speaking, we stop speaking:
Too.

18. The Witnesses Were Never Really Defeated

Now we can look backward.
The beast:
Conquered them.
That is exactly what Verse 7:
Said.
But what did that conquest finally:
Accomplish?
Their testimony had already been:
Completed.
Their death lasted three and a half:
Days.
God raised:
Them.
God called them:
Up.
Their enemies watched their:
Vindication.
The beast conquered them—
and still failed to:
Win.
That is Revelation's strange arithmetic of:
Victory.

19. Faithfulness Can Outlive the Faithful

The witnesses die.
But their testimony continues to:
Speak.
Their resurrection becomes part of the:
Testimony.
Their ascension becomes part of the:
Testimony.
Even their death becomes part of the story through which God reveals His:
Faithfulness.
A faithful life can continue speaking long after the voice itself becomes:
Silent.

Perhaps that is worth remembering whenever we wonder whether our small acts of faithfulness really:
Matter.

20. The Second Woe Has Passed

Then Verse 14 gives us a transition.
"The second woe is past."
The sixth trumpet has brought us through:
Terrifying scenes.
The demonic cavalry.
The little book.
John's recommissioning.
The measuring of the temple.
The Two Witnesses.
Their death.
Their vindication.
And now:
The second woe has:
Passed.
The vision moves:
Forward.

21. The Third Woe Is Coming Soon

But there is little time to:
Rest.
"The third woe cometh quickly."
The seventh trumpet is:
Near.
And when it sounds, heaven will announce one of the great declarations of the entire:
Book.
The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His:
Christ.
The story is moving toward:
Kingship.
Toward:
Judgment.
Toward:
Victory.
Toward the revelation that the Lamb who appeared slain is indeed:
Lord.

22. Do Not Declare the Winner Too Soon

Perhaps that is the great pastoral lesson of Revelation:
11:7–14.

Verse 7:
The witnesses are dead.
Verse 10:
The world celebrates.
If we stopped there, we would know exactly who:
Won.
Then comes Verse: 11
The witnesses:
Stand.
Verse 12:
They ascend.
Verse 13:
Their enemies confront the judgment of:
God.
Things look very different when the story is allowed to:
Finish.
Faith sometimes means refusing to declare the winner while God is still writing the:
Story.

Pastoral Reflection

There are moments in life that look like:
Verse 7.
Something dies.
A door closes.
A ministry ends.
A relationship changes.
A prayer seems unanswered.
A diagnosis comes.
A dream disappears.
And from where we stand, the conclusion seems:
Obvious.
This is:
Defeat.
But Revelation teaches us to be careful with that:
Word.
The witnesses really:
Died.
John does not pretend otherwise.
Faith does not require us to call death:
Life.
Loss:
Gain.
Pain:

Pleasure.
Faith tells the truth about:
Friday.
Jesus really was:
Crucified.
And then faith waits for:
Sunday.
Sometimes the difference between despair and hope is simply refusing to put a period where God has placed a:
Comma.
Verse 7 looks like a:
Period.
Verse 11 reveals it was not.
And perhaps there are places in our own lives where the wisest thing we can say is:
I do not know what God will do next.
But I know He has not surrendered the:
Story.

Something Worth Pondering

The world celebrated for three and a half:
Days.
They exchanged:
Gifts.
They congratulated one:
Another.
They thought the troublesome voices had finally been:
Silenced.
Then the witnesses:
Stood.
There may be no more dangerous mistake than declaring God defeated because we cannot yet see what He is:
Doing.
The beast had its:
Moment.
God had the final:
Word.
And perhaps that is why our prayer matters so much:
Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.
We do not need to know how every chapter will:
End.
We need to remain faithful in the chapter God has given us to:
Live.

Ask Yourself This:

Have I ever mistaken an apparent defeat for the end of God's work?
When circumstances seem hopeless, can I resist putting a period where God may have placed a comma?
And if faithfulness eventually costs me something I deeply value, can I trust that God's final verdict matters more than the world's temporary celebration?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:7

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."
— Revelation 11:7, KJV

And now everything:
Changes.
For 1,260 days the witnesses have:
Prophesied.
Those who attempted to harm them could not:
Prevail.
They stood before the Lord of the:
Earth.
They spoke.
They witnessed.
They endured.
And now John says:
"And when they shall have finished their testimony..."
Only:
Then.
The beast appears.
War is made against:
Them.
The witnesses are:
Conquered.
And they are:
Killed.
If we stopped reading at Verse 7, the conclusion might seem:
Obvious.
The beast:
Won.
But Revelation has taught us to be very careful about deciding who has won while God is still writing the:

Story.

1. “When”

The first word establishes the:
Boundary.
“When.”
Not:
If.
Not:
Before.
Not whenever the beast chooses.
“And when they shall have finished their testimony.”
The timing belongs to:
God.
Verse 5 told us that attempts to harm the witnesses would:
Fail.
Verse 7 tells us that the beast will kill:
Them.
Those statements are not:
Contradictory.
Between them stands one enormously important:
Sentence.
They have finished their:
Testimony.

2. “They Have Finished”

There may be no more important words in the:
Verse.
Finished.
The witnesses have completed what they were given to:
Do.
Their mission has not been:
Interrupted.
Their testimony has not been cut:
Short.
The opposition has not forced God to change His:
Plan.
They have:
Finished.
That single word changes how we understand everything that:
Follows.

3. The Beast Does Not Arrive Early

Think about what we have already:
Seen.
People wanted to harm the:

Witnesses.
They could:
Not.
Fire consumed their:
Foes.
Their prophetic ministry continued for the appointed:
Period.
Then—
and only then—
the beast makes war against:
Them.
The beast does not determine when their ministry:
Ends.
God does.
The beast arrives only after the assignment is:
Complete.

4. Our Prayer Returns

And here the prayer we found in Verse 5 comes back with even greater:
Force.
Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.
That is exactly what has happened to these:
Witnesses.
They were not preserved forever from:
Suffering.
They were preserved through the completion of their:
Calling.
They remained faithful until the work was:
Done.
Perhaps that is a deeper prayer than:
Keep me safe.
Keep me comfortable.
Keep everything difficult away from:
Me.
Instead:
Keep me faithful until the work You have given me is:
Done.

5. “Their Testimony”

What have they finished?
Their:
Testimony.
That word takes us back to the heart of their:
Identity.
They are:

Witnesses.
Their purpose was never simply to demonstrate extraordinary:
Power.
Fire was not the:
Mission.
Drought was not the:
Mission.
Plagues were not the:
Mission.
Those things accompanied their:
Witness.
The mission was:
Testimony.
And the testimony is:
Finished.

6. A Finished Testimony Cannot Be Unspoken

The beast can kill the:
Witnesses.
But he cannot make their testimony never have been:
Given.
The words have been:
Spoken.
The witness has been:
Made.
The mission has been:
Completed.
Death can end the earthly life of the messenger.
It cannot travel backward through time and erase faithful:
Witness.
That is why the line we discovered earlier becomes so important:
The beast may kill the witnesses. But the beast cannot cancel the witness.

7. "The Beast"

And now, for the first time in Revelation, John introduces:
"The beast."
He does not stop here to explain everything about:
It.
That fuller picture will come:
Later.
For now, John tells us enough.
The beast is an enemy of God's:
Witnesses.
It comes from the:
Bottomless pit.

It makes war against:
Them.
It conquers them.
And it kills:
Them.
The story is introducing another manifestation of the evil that opposes:
God.

8. “That Ascendeth out of the Bottomless Pit”

We have encountered the bottomless pit:
Before.
In Chapter 9 it was opened.
Smoke rose from:
It.
The locust plague emerged from:
It.
Now the beast comes up from that same realm of:
Darkness.
John is locating the beast symbolically within the forces opposed to:
God.
Whatever further details Revelation will later give us, its allegiance is already:
Clear.
This beast does not come from the throne.
It comes from the:
Abyss.

9. We Will Let Revelation Introduce the Beast

There is a temptation here to import everything we know from later chapters immediately into Verse: 7
But perhaps we should allow Revelation to tell its story in its own:
Order.
John will have much more to say about the:
Beast.
We will get there.
For now, we know what John wants us to know at this point in the:
Vision.
The beast opposes the witnesses of:
God.
That is enough for:
Verse 7.

10. “Shall Make War against Them”

The beast does not merely disagree with the:
Witnesses.
It makes:

War.
That language is significant.
The conflict is larger than a personal:
Dispute.
This is the collision between faithful witness and organized:
Opposition.
The witnesses speak for:
God.
The beast rises against:
Them.
Revelation is showing us the spiritual seriousness of the conflict surrounding faithful:
Testimony.

11. The Witnesses Do Not Start the War

Notice who makes war:
The beast.
The witnesses:
Prophesy.
The beast:
Makes war.
That distinction matters.
The witnesses are not described as seeking conflict for conflict's:
Sake.
Their calling is to:
Witness.
Opposition turns their testimony into a:
Battlefield.
Faithful witness may produce conflict.
But producing conflict is not the same as making conflict the:
Mission.

12. “And Shall Overcome Them”

Then John uses a word that should make us:
Pause.
The beast will:
Conquer them.
Conquer.
That sounds:
Final.
It sounds like:
Victory.
It sounds as though everything the witnesses represented has:
Failed.
And Revelation deliberately allows the scene to look that:

Way.
The beast conquers.
The witnesses:
Fall.
But Revelation has already taught us that appearances can be profoundly:
Misleading.

13. We Have Heard the Language of Conquering Before

"Conquer" is not new language in:
Revelation.
Christ promised blessings to those who:
Conquer.
The Lion of Judah has:
Conquered.
And when John turned to see that conquering Lion—
he saw:
A Lamb.
Standing as if it had been:
Slaughtered.
That changed our understanding of what victory looks like in:
Revelation.
The Lamb conquered through apparent:
Defeat.
Now the witnesses are apparently:
Conquered.
Perhaps we should be careful before deciding what that means.

14. The Beast Conquers Them—but Does He Defeat Them?

There is a difference between being:
Killed—
and being:
Defeated.
The witnesses have already completed their:
Testimony.
They have remained faithful.
They have done what God sent them to:
Do.
The beast can end their earthly:
Lives.
But what exactly has he:
Defeated?
Not their:
Faithfulness.
Not their:

Testimony.
Not God's:
Purpose.
He conquers their bodies.
He does not conquer the purpose for which they:
Lived.

15. “And Kill Them”

John does not soften the:
Outcome.
They are:
Killed.
Faithful service does not spare them from:
Death.
Divine authority does not spare them from:
Death.
Miraculous power does not spare them from:
Death.
Standing before the Lord of the earth does not spare them from:
Death.
And that may challenge some of our assumptions about God's:
Protection.
They were protected.
Until the work was:
Done.
Then their death itself becomes part of the:
Witness.

16. Death Does Not Mean God Has Abandoned Them

If we were watching only from:
Earth—
we might conclude:
God protected them before.
Now He has stopped.
Something has gone:
Wrong.
Revelation asks us to see from heaven's:
Perspective.
Nothing has gone wrong.
The testimony is:
Finished.
The witnesses remain within God's:
Purpose.
The beast has not caught God by:
Surprise.

Death is real.
But abandonment is:
Not.

17. Faithfulness Is Not Measured by Survival

This verse gives us a difficult but important:
Truth.
We sometimes measure success by:
Survival.
Did the ministry continue?
Did the institution survive?
Did the person escape?
Did everything turn out the way we:
Wanted?
Revelation offers another measurement.
Were they:
Faithful?
Did they complete the:
Testimony?
The witnesses die.
And yet the answer to both questions is:
Yes.

18. Sometimes Finishing Faithfully Looks Like Losing

From the world's perspective, Verse 7 looks like:
Failure.
The witnesses are dead.
The beast is standing.
The opposition appears to have:
Won.
And the next verses will make that appearance even:
Stronger.
The world will celebrate.
But heaven's verdict cannot be determined by the world's:
Celebration.
Sometimes faithfulness looks like losing—
until God reveals the rest of the:
Story.

19. The Cross Has Already Taught Us This

Christians should recognize this:
Pattern.
Friday looked like:
Defeat.
Jesus was arrested.
Condemned.

Mocked.
Crucified.
Killed.
Buried.
His enemies could reasonably have believed:
It is finished.
And in one sense—
it:
Was.
But not in the sense they:
Imagined.
The apparent defeat of Christ became the place of His:
Victory.
Revelation never allows the Church to forget the:
Lamb.

20. The Witnesses Follow the Pattern of the Lamb

The witnesses bear:
Testimony.
They face:
Opposition.
They are:
Killed.
And soon—
they will be:
Vindicated.
That pattern should sound:
Familiar.
Faithful witness in Revelation follows the path of:
Jesus.
Not because suffering is good in:
Itself.
But because the world does not possess the power to turn faithful suffering into ultimate:
Defeat.
The Lamb has already changed the meaning of:
Victory.

21. Evil Can Be Given a Moment

Verse 7 gives the beast a terrible:
Moment.
It makes war.
It conquers.
It kills.
Those verbs are:

Real.
Revelation does not pretend evil lacks:
Power.
But evil's power is never the same as God's:
Sovereignty.
The beast has a moment.
God has:
Eternity.
And confusing those two perspectives is one of the easiest ways for frightened people to lose:
Hope.

22. The Story Is Not Over at Verse 7

Perhaps this is the most important thing we can say before moving:
Forward.
Do not stop reading at Verse: 7
If you stop here—
the beast:
Wins.
The witnesses:
Lose.
Evil triumphs.
Faithfulness ends in:
Death.
But John has more to:
Show us.
And sometimes the difference between despair and hope is simply refusing to put a period where God has placed a:
Comma.
The witnesses are:
Dead.
But the story is not:
Finished.
Their testimony is finished.
God's work is:
Not.

Pastoral Reflection

There comes a point in every life when we confront the fact that faithfulness does not guarantee the outcome we would:
Choose.
We can obey God and still:
Suffer.
We can speak truth and still be:
Rejected.

We can serve faithfully and still watch something we love come to an:
End.
And eventually, unless Christ returns first, every faithful servant reaches the end of earthly:
Life.
So perhaps the greatest prayer is not:
Lord, make sure nothing painful ever happens to me.
Perhaps it is:
Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.
The witnesses of Revelation 11 were not spared:
Death.
But death did not arrive before their testimony was:
Finished.
Their enemies could not cancel their:
Calling.
The beast could not erase their:
Witness.
And death could not change the fact that they had been:
Faithful.
There is enormous peace in realizing that our lives do not have to last forever for our lives to have been faithfully:
Lived.
Our calling is not to control how every chapter:
Ends.
Our calling is to remain faithful while God is still giving us words to:
Write.

Something Worth Pondering

“And when they shall have finished their testimony...”
Perhaps those are not frightening:
Words.
Perhaps they are beautiful:
Words.
Finished.
Not interrupted.
Not abandoned.
Not wasted.
Finished.
There may come a day when each of us reaches the end of whatever work God has placed into our:
Hands.
And perhaps there could be few better things said of a servant of God than:
They finished their:
Testimony.

They remained faithful.
They completed what God gave them to:
Do.
And when the world thought the story was over—
God still had another:
Verse.

Ask Yourself This:

Do I measure faithfulness by whether things turn out the way I want—or by whether I remain faithful to what God has given me to do?
When something appears to end in defeat, am I willing to wait before deciding that God has lost?
And could I make this my prayer:
Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:8

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”
— Revelation 11:8, KJV

The witnesses have:
Finished.
The beast has made war against:
Them.
It has conquered:
Them.
It has killed:
Them.
But the humiliation does not end with their:
Death.
Their bodies remain in the:
Street.
Unburied.
Exposed.
Visible.
And John tells us where.
The:
Great city.
Then he gives that city not one name—
but several.
Sodom.
Egypt.
And the place where their Lord was:
Crucified.
Those names do not sit comfortably:
Together.
Sodom was one place.
Egypt another.
Jesus was crucified outside:
Jerusalem.
John knows:
That.
So perhaps he is not asking us merely:
Where is this city?

Perhaps he is asking something deeper:
What has this city become?

1. “Their Dead Bodies”

John does not soften the:
Scene.
The witnesses are:
Dead.
Their bodies remain:
There.
These are the same witnesses who had exercised extraordinary:
Authority.
Fire.
Drought.
Blood.
Plagues.
Yet now they lie:
Motionless.
If we were evaluating God's faithfulness by appearances alone, this would be a difficult moment to:
Explain.
The servants of God appear utterly:
Defeated.

2. Their Bodies Are Left in the Street

The bodies lie:
“In the street.”
They are not:
Buried.
They are not treated with:
Dignity.
They are exposed publicly.
In the ancient world, denying burial could be an especially severe form of:
Humiliation.
The enemies of the witnesses do not merely want them:
Dead.
They want their defeat to be:
Seen.
Their bodies become a public:
Display.

3. Humiliation After Death

There is something particularly cruel about dishonoring someone who can no longer defend:
Themselves.
The witnesses cannot answer.

Cannot move.
Cannot:
Protest.
Their enemies appear to possess complete:
Control.
And that is exactly what makes the scene so:
Powerful.
The world is doing everything possible to communicate:
They lost.
But the world does not know what God is about to:
Do.

4. The Bodies Become Trophies

The dead witnesses function almost like:
Trophies.
Here are the prophets who tormented us.
Here are the voices we wanted:
Silenced.
Here is proof that their power is:
Gone.
The world will soon look upon those bodies and:
Celebrate.
But there is a danger in turning the servants of God into trophies of your:
Victory.
God may not be finished with:
Them.

5. “The Great City”

John calls the location:
“The great city.”
That expression will become increasingly important as Revelation:
Continues.
Later in the book, “the great city” will be closely associated with:
Babylon.
But here John immediately gives us other symbolic:
Names.
Sodom.
Egypt.
And the place where the Lord was:
Crucified.
The imagery is deliberately:
Layered.
John seems less interested in giving us a street address than in revealing the spiritual character of the world that rejects God's:
Witness.

6. “Spiritually Is Called”

Fortunately, John gives us an interpretive:
Clue.
The city is:
“spiritually is called”
Sodom and:
Egypt.
That phrase matters.
John signals that these names carry prophetic or symbolic:
Meaning.
He is not confusing:
Geography.
He is interpreting spiritual:
Reality.
The names tell us something about what the city:
Represents.

7. Sodom

The first name is:
Sodom.
Throughout Scripture, Sodom becomes associated with profound:
Corruption.
Rebellion.
Injustice.
And divine:
Judgment.
John does not need to explain the entire story.
The name itself carries biblical:
Weight.
To call the great city “Sodom” is to say something about its spiritual:
Condition.
This is a society standing in rebellion against:
God.

8. We Should Let Scripture Define Sodom Broadly

It is easy to reduce Sodom to one particular:
Sin.
Scripture's own reflections are broader than:
That.
The biblical portrait includes arrogance.
Excess.
Neglect of the needy.
Grave immorality.
Violence.
And rebellion against:

God.
So when John invokes Sodom, we should allow the full prophetic weight of the name to:
Stand.
The city has become a place where human rebellion has hardened against the purposes of:
God.

9. Egypt

Then John gives us another:
Name.
Egypt.
For Israel, Egypt represented:
Bondage.
Oppression.
Pharaoh.
The place where God's people were enslaved and God's Word was:
Resisted.
Again the imagery fits Revelation:
Beautifully.
The witnesses speak.
The rulers of the world resist.
God's servants are oppressed.
And the powers of the earth imagine themselves stronger than the God who sent:
Them.
We have seen this story:
Before.

10. Pharaoh's Question Still Echoes

Pharaoh once asked, in effect:
Who is the Lord that I should obey:
Him?
The plagues answered that:
Question.
Now Revelation has just described witnesses exercising plague-like:
Authority.
The Exodus echo becomes even:
Stronger.
Egypt is not merely a place on an ancient:
Map.
It becomes a biblical picture of human power refusing to acknowledge the authority of:
God.

11. Sodom and Egypt Together

Now place the two names beside one:
Another.
Sodom.
Egypt.
Corruption.
Oppression.
Rebellion.
Bondage.
Judgment.
The great city carries characteristics associated with:
Both.
John layers biblical memories so that no single image has to carry the entire:
Meaning.
This is a world that has become morally rebellious like:
Sodom—
and hostile toward God's people like:
Egypt.

12. “Where Also Our Lord Was Crucified”

Then John adds the most startling description of:
All.
This is where:
“Our Lord was crucified.”
Now Jerusalem inevitably enters the:
Picture.
Jesus was crucified there.
But John does not simply call the city:
Jerusalem.
Instead, the city where the Lord was crucified is spiritually is called:
Sodom.
And:
Egypt.
That is severe prophetic:
Language.
A place associated with God's presence can nevertheless become a place that rejects God's:
Messiah.

13. Sacred History Does Not Guarantee Present Faithfulness

That should make every religious community:
Think.
Jerusalem possessed an extraordinary sacred:

History.
Temple.
Priests.
Scripture.
Covenant.
Prophets.
Yet Jesus was:
Crucified.
Past encounters with God do not guarantee present:
Faithfulness.
A church can have a glorious:
History.
A denomination can have a faithful:
Heritage.
A congregation can remember remarkable seasons of:
Ministry.
But yesterday's faithfulness cannot substitute for today's:
Obedience.

14. Religious Places Can Resist God Too

Revelation does not allow us to divide the world too:
Simply.
Sacred place:
Good.
Secular place:
Bad.
Jesus was crucified in the very religious world that possessed the Scriptures pointing toward:
Him.
The witnesses now suffer within a city described using several biblical images of:
Rebellion.
Sometimes resistance to God comes from obviously hostile:
Places.
Sometimes it comes from deeply religious:
Ones.
The question is never merely:
What do we call ourselves?
The question is:
How do we respond when God speaks?

15. “Their Lord”

There is a small phrase we should not:
Miss.
“Their Lord.”

The witnesses may be:
Dead.
But Jesus remains their:
Lord.
Death has not changed that:
Relationship.
The beast has conquered their bodies.
It has not transferred their:
Allegiance.
They belonged to Christ while they:
Prophesied.
They belong to Christ while they lie dead in the:
Street.
Death does not change whose they:
Are.

16. Our Lord Was Crucified Too

There may be enormous comfort hidden in that:
Phrase.
The witnesses suffer.
But their Lord has suffered:
Before them.
They are killed.
Their Lord was:
Killed.
They are publicly humiliated.
Their Lord was publicly:
Humiliated.
They appear defeated.
Their Lord once appeared defeated:
Too.
The witnesses are not walking a road their Lord has never:
Walked.
They follow the:
Lamb.

17. The Cross Changes How We Read Their Death

Without the cross, Verse 8 might look like nothing but:
Failure.
But once John reminds us that their Lord was:
Crucified—
everything changes.
We know what happened after the:
Cross.
The tomb was not the:

End.
Death did not have the final:
Word.
The apparent victory of Christ's enemies became the setting for God's greatest:
Victory.
So when John reminds us of the crucified Lord while His witnesses lie dead—
perhaps he is quietly preparing us for what comes:
Next.

18. The World Repeats the Same Mistake

Those who crucified Jesus believed they had ended His:
Influence.
Kill the teacher.
Silence the:
Message.
Close the:
Case.
Now the world makes the same mistake with the:
Witnesses.
Kill the prophets.
Silence the:
Testimony.
Celebrate the:
Victory.
But the world has forgotten something.
The God of Revelation is the God who raises the:
Dead.

19. The Bodies Are Still There

For now, however, John makes us look at the:
Bodies.
He does not rush immediately to:
Resurrection.
That matters.
Revelation does not deny the reality of:
Loss.
The witnesses really die.
Their bodies really lie in the:
Street.
Their humiliation is:
Real.
Christian hope does not require pretending that painful things are not:
Painful.

Hope tells the truth about death—
and then waits to see what God will:
Do.

20. Friday Must Be Allowed to Be Friday

We know Sunday is:
Coming.
But Friday still:
Hurt.
Jesus really suffered.
The disciples really grieved.
The tomb really:
Closed.
Likewise, Revelation lets the witnesses lie in the street before it allows them to:
Stand.
Perhaps there is pastoral wisdom:
Here.
We do not need to rush grieving people past their:
Grief.
We do not need to pretend every loss immediately feels:
Redemptive.
Sometimes faith simply stands beside the street and:
Waits.

21. Do Not Confuse Public Opinion With God's Verdict

Everyone who sees the witnesses' bodies will assume something:
Obvious.
They lost.
The beast:
Won.
Their God failed to:
Protect them.
But public consensus does not determine divine:
Reality.
The whole world can agree about something—
and still be:
Wrong.
Heaven has not yet rendered its final:
Verdict.
And heaven's verdict is the only one that will:
Last.

22. The Street Is Not Their Final Destination

This may be the simplest hope in the:
Verse.

Their bodies lie in the:
Street.
But they will not remain:
There.
The street is a location.
It is not their final:
Destination.
The humiliation is a moment.
It is not their final:
Identity.
The beast has written one line in their story.
God still holds the:
Pen.

Pastoral Reflection

There are moments when life can leave us feeling as though we have been laid out in the:
Street.
Exposed.
Defeated.
Misunderstood.
Perhaps even humiliated.
Other people may look at what has happened and draw their own:
Conclusions.
You failed.
Your prayer failed.
Your ministry failed.
Your faith failed.
Your God failed:
You.
Revelation 11 reminds us that appearances are terrible judges of:
Eternity.
The witnesses lie dead in the:
Street.
But they still belong to:
"Their Lord."
And their Lord knows something about appearing defeated.
He knows the:
Cross.
He knows public humiliation.
He knows the:
Tomb.
And He knows:
Resurrection.

Perhaps that is why believers can tell the truth about painful circumstances without surrendering:
Hope.
We do not have to pretend Friday is:
Sunday.
We simply refuse to believe Friday is the end of the:
Story.

Something Worth Pondering

John could have said:
The witnesses were killed in the great city.
Instead he reminds us:
Their Lord was crucified there:
Too.
Perhaps that is the interpretive key.
Their suffering is being placed beside:
His.
Their apparent defeat is being placed beside:
His.
Their death is being placed beside:
His.
And if we know what God did with the apparent defeat of:
Jesus—
perhaps we should be very careful before deciding what God can do with the apparent defeat of His:
Witnesses.
The street is where their bodies lie.
It is not where their story ends.

Ask Yourself This:

Have I ever mistaken public opinion about my circumstances for God's verdict upon my life?
Can I allow painful seasons to be genuinely painful without concluding that pain has the final word?
And when I cannot yet see resurrection, can I remember that I belong to a Lord who knows the road from the cross to the empty tomb?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:9

“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.”
— Revelation 11:9, KJV

The witnesses are:
Dead.
Their bodies lie in the street of the great:
City.
And now the world:
Watches.
Peoples.
Tribes.
Languages.
Nations.
For three and a half:
Days.
They gaze upon the bodies of the two:
Witnesses.
And they refuse them even the dignity of:
Burial.
The witnesses had spent 1,260 days:
Speaking.
Now they say:
Nothing.
The world that wanted them silent has finally gotten what it:
Wanted.
Or so it:
Thinks.
Because the silence of the witnesses is about to become one of the loudest moments in their entire:
Testimony.

1. “Three Days and an Half”

Once again John gives us a measured period of:
Time.
Three and a half:
Days.
The witnesses had prophesied for:
1,260 days.
Now their bodies remain exposed for three and a half:

Days.
Whatever additional symbolic significance we may find in the familiar three-and-a-half pattern, one contrast is immediately:
Striking.
Their ministry was long.
Their apparent defeat is:
Brief.
The world gets its celebration.
But not for: Long.

2. Even Their Humiliation Has a Limit

That fits a pattern we have already seen.
Forty-two months.
1,260 days.
Three and a half:
Days.
Revelation keeps placing boundaries around the activity of:
Evil.
The nations may trample.
But not:
Forever.
The witnesses may lie dead.
But not:
Forever.
The world may celebrate.
But not:
Forever.
Evil continually discovers that God has placed a boundary around its:
Moment.

3. The Clock Still Belongs to God

The witnesses appear completely:
Powerless.
They cannot speak.
Cannot move.
Cannot defend:
Themselves.
Yet even now the clock has not passed into the hands of their:
Enemies.
Three and a half:
Days.
The period is:
Measured.
The same God who knew the 1,260 days of their witness knows the three and a half days of their:

Silence.
The clock still belongs to:
God.

4. “People and Kindreds and Tongues and Nations”

John expands the audience:
Enormously.
Peoples.
Tribes.
Languages.
Nations.
This is not portrayed as some private local:
Event.
The humiliation of the witnesses becomes visible across the human:
World.
That language should sound familiar to readers of:
Revelation.
John has repeatedly used similar language to describe humanity in its vast:
Diversity.
The scene has a global:
Horizon.

5. The Same World the Gospel Reaches

There is an interesting tension in this:
Language.
Revelation has shown us a redeemed multitude from every:
Nation.
Tribe.
People.
Language.
Now representatives of peoples, tribes, languages, and nations gaze upon the bodies of God's:
Witnesses.
The same human world toward which God's saving purposes extend is also capable of resisting His:
Testimony.
Revelation never reduces humanity to simple:
Categories.
Among the nations are those who worship the:
Lamb.
Among the nations are those who oppose His:
Witnesses.
The issue is ultimately one of:
Allegiance.

6. “Shall See”

John does not merely say they:
See.
They:
Gaze.
Their attention remains fixed upon the:
Bodies.
The witnesses who had tormented them through their testimony have become an object of:
Fascination.
Perhaps there is relief in the:
Looking.
Perhaps satisfaction.
Perhaps disbelief that the troublesome prophets are finally:
Dead.
John does not tell us what every observer is:
Thinking.
So neither should:
We.
But he does tell us they keep:
Watching.

7. They Could Ignore the Message—but Not the Witness

There is something almost ironic in the:
Scene.
For 1,260 days the witnesses spoke.
The world wanted them:
Silent.
Now they are silent.
And the world cannot stop looking at:
Them.
The witnesses no longer speak with their:
Mouths.
Yet their bodies continue to command the world's:
Attention.
Sometimes a faithful witness continues speaking even after the voice has fallen:
Silent.

8. Their Death Becomes Part of Their Testimony

The witnesses' testimony did not include only the words they:
Spoke.
Their faithfulness unto death becomes part of the:
Witness.
They did not abandon their calling when opposition became:

Dangerous.
They finished their:
Testimony.
Now their bodies bear silent witness to the cost of that:
Faithfulness.
The world sees what faithfulness cost:
Them.
Soon it will see what God thinks their faithfulness was:
Worth.

9. “Their Dead Bodies”

John repeats the phrase:
“their dead bodies.”
He will not allow us to soften what has:
Happened.
They are:
Dead.
This is not merely apparent death.
Not temporary unconsciousness described as:
Death.
Not an illusion staged by the:
Witnesses.
John wants the reversal that follows to carry its full:
Weight.
The breath of life will enter people who are genuinely:
Dead.

10. Revelation Does Not Need to Minimize Death

Christian hope does not depend upon pretending death is less terrible than it:
Is.
Death is an:
Enemy.
It separates.
It grieves.
It wounds.
It leaves an empty place where someone once:
Stood.
Revelation can look directly at dead bodies lying in a street because
Revelation believes something stronger than denial.
It believes in the God who gives:
Life.

11. “Refuse to Let Them”

Then the scene becomes even more:
Deliberate.
The nations do not merely fail to bury the:

Witnesses.
They:
Refuse.
Someone apparently might place the bodies in a:
Tomb.
But permission is:
Denied.
The humiliation is:
Intentional.
Their enemies want the bodies to remain:
Visible.

12. Burial Would Give Them Dignity

Burial would acknowledge the humanity of the:
Dead.
It would provide a measure of:
Dignity.
Closure.
Respect.
Their enemies refuse even:
That.
The witnesses were hated while they:
Spoke.
They are dishonored after they:
Die.
Opposition has moved beyond rejecting their message.
It now seeks to degrade the:
Messengers.

13. The World Wants Evidence of Its Victory

Why leave the bodies:
Visible?
John does not explicitly tell us.
But within the narrative, their exposure certainly functions as visible evidence of apparent:
Defeat.
Look.
They are still:
Dead.
Look.
The prophets are:
Gone.
Look.
The beast:
Won.

Every passing hour seems to strengthen that:
Conclusion.
Until suddenly it:
Doesn't.

14. The Longer They Lie There, the Greater the Vindication

There is an interesting narrative effect in the:
Delay.
If the witnesses immediately rose, someone might wonder what had really:
Happened.
Instead:
One day.
Two days.
Three:
Days.
The world has time to:
Look.
Time to confirm.
Time to celebrate.
Time to become confident that the story is:
Over.
Then God acts.
The delay makes the reversal impossible to:
Ignore.

15. Waiting Does Not Mean God Is Absent

That may be one of the pastoral truths hidden in these three and a half:
Days.
Nothing appears to be:
Happening.
The witnesses lie:
Dead.
The world:
Watches.
God seems:
Silent.
But divine silence is not divine:
Absence.
God has already established the limit.
Three and a half:
Days.
The resurrection has not happened yet.
But that does not mean resurrection is not:
Coming.

16. There Is a Difference Between "Not Yet" and "Never"

The witnesses remain dead:
Today.
Still dead:
Tomorrow.
Still lying there the next:
Day.
It would be easy for someone watching to conclude:
Never.
They will never:
Rise.
God will never:
Act.
Their testimony will never be:
Vindicated.
But the problem is that human beings often translate:
Not yet—
into:
Never.
Revelation warns us not to confuse the:
Two.

17. Faith Sometimes Has to Live in the Three and a Half Days

We like the moment when the witnesses:
Stand.
We like the voice from:
Heaven.
We like the ascension.
We like:
Vindication.
But before any of that comes:
Waiting.
Three and a half days when nothing seems to:
Change.
Faith sometimes lives precisely:
There.
Between the promise and the:
Fulfillment.
Between the loss and the:
Restoration.
Between Friday and:

Sunday.

18. The World Is Watching

There is another important element.
The world:
Watches.
The witnesses' lives were public.
Their deaths are:
Public.
Their eventual vindication will also be:
Public.
That means God's answer will occur before the same eyes that witnessed their:
Humiliation.
Those who gaze upon the bodies now will have no difficulty recognizing what happens when those same bodies: Stand.

19. Their Enemies Are Becoming Witnesses Too

There is almost an irony in the word:
Witness.
The two witnesses bore testimony to the:
World.
Now the world becomes a witness to what happens to:
Them.
People watch their:
Death.
They will watch their:
Resurrection.
They will watch their:
Ascension.
Those who refused the testimony of the prophets will themselves become eyewitnesses to God's vindication of those:
Prophets.
They may not like what they see.
But they will:
See it.

20. God Can Use the Place of Humiliation as the Place of Vindication

The witnesses are not secretly removed and raised somewhere:
Else.
The place of their humiliation becomes the stage for their:
Vindication.
The same bodies the world:
Mocked—

will:
Stand.
The same people who gazed upon them:
Dead—
will see them:
Alive.
Sometimes God does not erase the place where we were:
Broken.
Sometimes He reveals His faithfulness in the very place where everyone assumed we had been:
Defeated.

21. The Tomb They Are Denied Will Not Be Needed

There is one beautiful irony in the:
Verse.
Their enemies refuse to place them in a:
Tomb.
That is intended as:
Humiliation.
But soon the witnesses will not need:
One.
The world denies them a burial place.
God gives them:
Life.
Their enemies deny them the dignity of a tomb.
Heaven will call them:
Up.
What the world withholds becomes almost irrelevant beside what God is about to:
Give.

22. Do Not Make Final Judgments During the Waiting

Perhaps Verse 9 gives us a simple pastoral:
Warning.
Three and a half days can feel very:
Long—
when you are living inside:
Them.
Nothing changes.
Nothing moves.
Nothing appears:
Hopeful.
And everyone around you may already have decided what the situation:
Means.
But the story has not reached Verse: 11

Do not make an eternal judgment from a temporary:
Silence.
God may still have another:
Word.

Pastoral Reflection

Some of the hardest seasons of faith are not the moments when something terrible:
Happens.
They are the days:
Afterward.
When nothing seems to:
Change.
The prayer has been:
Prayed.
The tears have been:
Shed.
The loss is:
Real.
And God seems:
Quiet.
Those are the three-and-a-half-day seasons of:
Life.
We know what we hope God will:
Do.
But He has not done it:
Yet.
And “not yet” can begin feeling painfully like:
“never.”
Revelation 11 asks us not to confuse the:
Two.
The witnesses lie dead.
The world watches.
Their enemies refuse them burial.
Nothing in Verse 9 looks:
Hopeful.
But Verse 9 is not the final:
Verse.
Sometimes faith is not celebrating because we can already see the:
Answer.
Sometimes faith is simply refusing to declare the story over while God remains:
Silent.

Something Worth Pondering

For three and a half days the world looks at the witnesses and thinks it knows exactly what their bodies:
Mean.
Defeat.
Failure.
Silence.
The end.
But the world is interpreting a story that has not yet been:
Finished.
Perhaps we do that too.
We look at the circumstances in front of us.
We interpret them.
We draw our conclusions.
And sometimes we forget that God may still have another:
Verse.
There is a difference between "not yet" and "never."
And faith must sometimes live in the space between the:
Two.

Ask Yourself This:

Have I ever interpreted God's delay as God's absence?
Is there something in my life that I have called "never" when God may only have said "not yet"?
And when I find myself living between Friday and Sunday, can I trust God enough to wait without writing the ending for Him?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:10

“And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”
— Revelation 11:10, KJV

The witnesses are:
Dead.
Their bodies remain exposed in the:
Street.
The world watches.
And now John tells us how the inhabitants of the earth:
Respond.
They:
Gloat.
They:
Celebrate.
They exchange:
Presents.
The death of God's prophets has become an occasion for:
Joy.
That may be one of the most disturbing scenes in the entire:
Passage.
Not simply because the witnesses have been killed.
But because people are happy that they are:
Dead.
The voices that had confronted them are finally:
Silent.
The testimony they did not want to hear has apparently been:
Stopped.
And the world throws a:
Party.
But the celebration itself reveals something important.
The witnesses had been heard.
Their message had:
Landed.
The world was not celebrating because the witnesses were irrelevant.
It was celebrating because their testimony had become impossible to:
Ignore.

1. “They That Dwell upon the Earth”

John again uses an expression that has become important throughout:

Revelation.
“They that dwell upon the earth.”
This is more than simply a statement about where people:
Live.
In Revelation, the phrase often describes humanity oriented toward the present world in opposition to:
God.
It is a description of:
Allegiance.
These are people whose response to God's witness is not repentance—but:
Rejection.

2. They Gloat

The first response is:
Gloating.
There is a difference between relief and:
Gloating.
Relief says:
The trouble is over.
Gloating says:
We won.
The suffering of the witnesses becomes something their enemies take pleasure:
In.
Their bodies remain in the street.
And the people who hated their testimony enjoy the sight of their apparent:
Defeat.

3. They Celebrate

Then the reaction becomes:
Celebration.
The death of the prophets is treated as:
Good news.
That is a remarkable reversal.
The witnesses had been proclaiming the Word of:
God.
Yet the world experiences their silence as:
Liberation.
No more:
Warnings.
No more:
Confrontation.
No more:
Prophecy.

No more uncomfortable:
Truth.
Finally—
quiet.

4. They Exchange Presents

John adds an almost shocking:
Detail.
They exchange:
Presents.
The celebration becomes organized enough to involve:
Gift-giving.
Their death has become something like a public:
Festival.
The world congratulates:
Itself.
The troublesome prophets are gone.
The voices have been silenced.
Life can return to:
Normal.
Or so everyone:
Thinks.

5. The World Has Created an Anti-Celebration

Throughout Scripture, God's people celebrate His acts of:
Deliverance.
They feast.
They remember.
They give thanks.
Here the pattern is grotesquely:
Reversed.
The world celebrates what it believes is deliverance from God's:
Witnesses.
The death of the prophets becomes the occasion for:
Joy.
What heaven values, the rebellious world:
Despises.
What heaven calls testimony, the world calls:
Torment.

6. “Because”

Then John tells us:
Why.
“Because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”
That explanation deserves careful:
Attention.

The witnesses were not ignored.
They were not dismissed as:
Irrelevant.
They were experienced as:
Torment.
Their testimony had gotten under the world's:
Skin.

7. The Prophets Had Become Uncomfortable

Prophetic truth has a way of making people:
Uncomfortable.
A prophet does not merely tell people what they want to:
Hear.
A prophet speaks the Word entrusted by:
God.
Sometimes that Word comforts.
Sometimes it:
Encourages.
Sometimes it gives:
Hope.
And sometimes it:
Confronts.
Calls to repentance.
Exposes sin.
Challenges idols.
Disturbs comfortable:
Assumptions.
That kind of testimony can feel like:
Torment—
to people determined not to:
Change.

8. The Problem Was Not That They Had Failed to Communicate

This is important.
The world understood enough of their testimony to be disturbed by:
It.
The witnesses had not failed because people rejected their:
Message.
Rejection is not necessarily evidence that a witness has spoken:
Poorly.
Sometimes rejection occurs precisely because the message has been understood:
Clearly.
The witnesses spoke.

The world heard.
And the world did not like what it:
Heard.

9. Truth Is Not Always Experienced as Comfort

We often speak of God's Word as:
Comfort.
And rightly:
So.
Scripture comforts the grieving.
Strengthens the weak.
Encourages the discouraged.
Gives hope to the:
Hopeless.
But the same Word can also:
Expose.
Convict.
Challenge.
Correct.
The Word that comforts the repentant may torment the:
Unrepentant.
Not because truth has changed—
but because the response to truth:
Has.

10. A Mirror Can Feel Like an Enemy

Sometimes we become angry with the thing that shows us what we do not want to:
See.
A mirror does not create the:
Face.
It reveals:
It.
Prophetic witness can function that:
Way.
The witnesses do not create the world's rebellion.
They expose:
It.
And rather than confront what the testimony reveals, the inhabitants of the earth choose to hate the:
Witnesses.
It is easier to break the mirror than to deal with what the mirror:
Shows.

11. Silencing the Messenger Does Not Change the Truth

This is one of humanity's oldest:

Mistakes.
If we silence the person speaking the truth—
perhaps the truth itself will:
Disappear.
Israel persecuted:
Prophets.
Jeremiah was opposed.
John the Baptist was:
Killed.
Jesus was:
Crucified.
Now the Two Witnesses are:
Killed.
But killing the messenger has never changed the truth of the:
Message.

12. The Celebration Reveals the Depth of Their Rejection

They do not merely disagree with the:
Prophets.
They celebrate their:
Deaths.
That tells us how deeply resistance has:
Hardened.
Repentance would have said:
Perhaps we should listen.
Humility would have asked:
Could they be right?
Instead the response is:
Thank God they are:
Gone.
When the removal of the voice feels better than confronting what the voice has said, the heart may already be dangerously:
Hard.

13. We Must Be Careful How We Apply This

There is also a pastoral caution we need to:
Make.
Not everyone who disagrees with us is rejecting God's:
Truth.
Not every criticism of a Christian is persecution.
And not every uncomfortable reaction proves that we have been:
Prophetic.
Sometimes people are uncomfortable because we have been:
Unkind.

Arrogant.
Careless.
Or simply:
Wrong.
We should never use Revelation 11 as permission to assume:
They dislike me, therefore I must be speaking for God.
The witnesses have authority because God has:
Sent them.
Our responsibility is first to make sure our witness actually resembles:
Christ.

14. Faithful Witness Is Not Deliberate Irritation

The witnesses became a torment because of their:
Testimony.
They were not commissioned to be:
Annoying.
There is a difference.
Christians are not called to provoke people merely so we can claim we have been:
Persecuted.
Faithful witness speaks truth.
In love.
With courage.
With humility.
And as Verse 3 reminded us—
wearing:
Sackcloth.

15. Remember the Sackcloth

That detail remains:
Important.
The same witnesses whose message torments the inhabitants of the earth are wearing:
Sackcloth.
Their testimony is severe.
But their posture is one of:
Mourning.
They do not delight in the judgment they:
Announce.
They grieve.
Truth without grief can become:
Cruel.
Grief without truth can become:
Sentimental.
The witnesses hold the two:

Together.

16. The World Celebrates Because the Pressure Seems Gone

Imagine the emotional:
Relief.
No more prophetic:
Voice.
No more call to:
Repent.
No more reminder that the Lord of the earth still:
Reigns.
The pressure seems:
Gone.
And perhaps that explains the:
Presents.
Everyone can finally return to life without those disturbing voices reminding them of:
God.
But removing the reminder does not remove the:
Reality.

17. You Can Silence the Alarm Without Extinguishing the Fire

There is an image worth:
Considering.
Suppose a fire alarm begins to:
Sound.
It is loud.
Annoying.
Disruptive.
You could solve the immediate discomfort by smashing the:
Alarm.
Now the room is:
Quiet.
But the fire is still:
Burning.
The witnesses are the alarm.
The world kills the:
Alarm.
And then celebrates the:
Silence.
But God's judgment has not disappeared merely because the warning has been:

Silenced.

18. The Celebration Is Tragically Premature

There is another problem with the:
Party.
It begins before the story is:
Finished.
The inhabitants of the earth have interpreted the bodies in the street as proof that the beast has:
Won.
So they celebrate.
Exchange presents.
Congratulate one:
Another.
But they have not reached Verse: 11
That is the great mistake of this:
Passage.
They celebrate too: Soon.

19. Three and a Half Days Is a Very Short Holiday

The witnesses prophesied for:
1,260 days.
The world celebrates for:
Three and a half.
That comparison is almost:
Humorous.
After all the effort to silence the prophets—
after the war—
after the killing—
after the public humiliation—
their great victory celebration lasts:
Three and a half days.
Then the bodies:
Move.
Sometimes evil's victory party ends much sooner than evil:
Expected.

20. The Presents Will Soon Feel Awkward

John does not say this.
So we will not pretend that he:
Does.
But knowing Verse 11 is coming gives the scene a remarkable:
Irony.
People are exchanging gifts because the prophets are:
Dead.
And very soon those same prophets will be standing on their:

Feet.
One wonders what becomes of the celebration:
Then.
The laughter will become:
Terror.
The party will:
Stop.
The interpretation of everything will:
Change.

21. The World Is About to Discover That Silence Is Not Defeat

The witnesses are:
Silent.
But silence does not mean:
Defeat.
Their bodies are motionless.
But motionlessness does not mean:
Finality.
The world has mistaken temporary silence for permanent:
Victory.
God is about to correct that:
Assumption.
The breath of life is:
Coming.

22. Do Not Envy the World's Celebration

There may be times when faithfulness feels:
Lonely.
The world seems to be celebrating.
Everyone else appears comfortable.
Compromise looks easier.
Silence looks:
Safer.
And faithfulness seems only to bring:
Trouble.
Revelation tells us not to envy a celebration that occurs in the middle of an unfinished:
Story.
The presents are being exchanged.
The witnesses are dead.
The beast appears victorious.
But heaven has not yet:
Spoken.

Pastoral Reflection

There is something deeply human about wanting uncomfortable voices to:
Disappear.
Sometimes we would rather remove the:
Reminder—
than face what it is reminding us:
About.
That can happen outside the:
Church.
And it can happen inside the Church:
Too.
We can become irritated with the sermon that touches the place we would rather keep:
Hidden.
The friend who lovingly tells us what we do not want to:
Hear.
The Scripture that refuses to bend around what we have already decided to:
Do.
The Spirit's conviction that will not leave us:
Alone.
Our first response may be:
Make it stop.
But perhaps before silencing an uncomfortable voice, we should ask:
Why does this bother me so:
Much?
Not every uncomfortable voice comes from:
God.
But neither should every uncomfortable voice be:
Dismissed.
Sometimes discomfort is the mercy of God refusing to allow us to remain comfortable with something that is destroying:
Us.

Something Worth Pondering

The inhabitants of the earth celebrate because the witnesses had been a:
Torment.
But perhaps the testimony tormented them because it kept pointing toward a truth they desperately wanted to:
Avoid.
They thought killing the witnesses would solve the:
Problem.
It only silenced the:
Alarm.
The fire was still:

Burning.
And perhaps that gives us a question worth carrying beyond Revelation: 11
When God's truth makes me uncomfortable, do I ask God to change the:
Message—
or do I allow God to change:
Me?
The world chose to silence the:
Witnesses.
It is about to discover that God has not been:
Silenced.

Ask Yourself This:

When Scripture makes me uncomfortable, is my first instinct to resist it—or to ask what God may be showing me?
Do I ever mistake another person's rejection of my words for proof that I must be right, rather than first examining whether I have spoken with truth, humility, and love?
And when faithfulness seems unpopular while compromise is being celebrated, can I remember that I may be watching only the middle of the story?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:11

“And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.”
— Revelation 11:11, KJV

But.
Sometimes an entire story can turn on a single:
Word.
The witnesses are:
Dead.
Their bodies lie in the:
Street.
The world:
Watches.
People gloat.
Celebrate.
Exchange:
Presents.
The troublesome prophets are finally:
Gone.
And then John writes:
But.
The beast has acted.
The world has celebrated.
The witnesses have lain dead for three and a half:
Days.
But...
God has not yet:
Spoken.

1. “And After”

Those two words change:
Everything.
“But after...”
There was a limit to the world's:
Celebration.
A boundary around the witnesses':
Death.
The three and a half days were real.
But they were not:
Permanent.

What looked final was actually:
Temporary.
The story had another:
Verse.

2. The Three and a Half Days End

Verse 9 told us how long the bodies would remain exposed:
Three and a half days.
Now John tells us that period has:
Ended.
Exactly as the 1,260 days of testimony had a boundary—
so does the period of apparent:
Defeat.
God has placed limits around:
Both.
The witnesses speak for the appointed:
Time.
They lie dead for the appointed:
Time.
Neither period belongs ultimately to the:
Beast.
The clock still belongs to:
God.

3. The World Had Three and a Half Days to Be Certain

The delay now becomes:
Important.
The witnesses did not immediately:
Rise.
Their bodies remained visible.
People from the nations gazed upon:
Them.
The inhabitants of the earth celebrated.
Presents were:
Exchanged.
Everyone had time to become absolutely convinced of one:
Thing.
The witnesses were:
Dead.
And then—
they:
Stand.

4. “The Spirit of Life”

John tells us what enters:
Them.

“The breath of life.”
Life does not return because the witnesses summon it:
Themselves.
They do not possess resurrection within their own:
Power.
Life comes to:
Them.
Death has rendered them completely:
Helpless.
And into that helplessness comes the breath of:
Life.

5. “From God”

Those two words tell us the source:
“from God.”
Not from the witnesses.
Not from medicine.
Not from human intervention.
Not from the:
Beast.
From:
God.
The beast had authority to:
Kill.
God has authority to give:
Life.
And those are not equal:
Powers.

6. The Beast Can Kill—God Can Raise

That distinction changes how we understand the entire:
Conflict.
The beast can make:
War.
The beast can conquer.
The beast can:
Kill.
Those are terrible powers.
But they are not ultimate:
Powers.
The beast can take life.
It cannot prevent God from giving life:
Again.
Death may be the greatest weapon available to the powers of this:
World.

But death is not the greatest power in:
God's world.

7. Ezekiel Echoes Again

John's language immediately brings another biblical vision to:
Mind.
Ezekiel stood before a valley filled with dry:
Bones.
The bones were:
Dead.
Very:
Dry.
Humanly speaking, the situation was beyond:
Hope.
Then came:
Breath.
Life.
Standing.
John's witnesses now participate in that same biblical pattern.
The breath comes from:
God.
The dead:
Stand.

8. “Can These Bones Live?”

The question asked in Ezekiel's vision still echoes:
Here.
Can these bones:
Live?
Can dead witnesses:
Stand?
Can apparent defeat become:
Vindication?
Can God bring life where everyone else sees only:
Death?
Ezekiel's answer remains the safest:
Answer.
“O Lord God, you:
Know.”
And God does.

9. God Specializes in Situations Beyond Human Repair

There was nothing the witnesses could do for:
Themselves.
That matters.
They could not restart their own:

Hearts.
They could not stand by their own:
Strength.
They could not speak another prophetic word until life itself was:
Restored.
God acts precisely where human ability has reached its:
End.
The witnesses contribute nothing to their own:
Resurrection.
They receive:
Life.

10. “Entered Them”

The breath of life does not merely surround:
Them.
It enters:
Them.
The bodies that had become public trophies of death become living bodies:
Again.
The change comes from the inside:
Out.
What the world had treated as evidence of God's defeat becomes evidence of God's life-giving:
Power.
The trophies of the beast become the testimony of:
God.

11. “They Stood on Their Feet”

And then comes one of the most satisfying sentences in the entire:
Chapter.
“They stood on their feet.”
The bodies everyone had been staring at:
Move.
The prophets everyone celebrated killing:
Rise.
The witnesses everyone assumed had been permanently silenced:
Stand.
No argument is necessary.
No explanation is:
Required.
They:
Stand.

12. Sometimes Standing Is the Testimony

For 1,260 days the witnesses testified with their:
Words.

Now they testify simply by:
Standing.
Their resurrection says what no sermon could say more:
Clearly.
The beast does not have the final:
Word.
Death does not have the final:
Word.
The inhabitants of the earth do not have the final:
Word.
God does.

13. The Same Bodies Stand

Notice the continuity.
The bodies lying in the street are the bodies that:
Stand.
God does not hide the evidence of their humiliation and substitute something:
Else.
The place of defeat becomes the place of:
Vindication.
The bodies that were mocked become the bodies through which God's power is:
Displayed.
The street has not:
Changed.
The witnesses have.

14. The World Has Been Watching

And remember Verse: 9
Peoples.
Tribes.
Languages.
Nations.
They were:
Watching.
The enemies wanted the bodies left in the street precisely so everyone could:
See.
That decision now works against:
Them.
The world that insisted upon public humiliation has created an audience for public:
Vindication.

15. God Does Not Need a Different Stage

There is something beautiful about:
That.

God does not move the witnesses somewhere private before raising:
Them.
He raises them where they:
Fell.
The street of humiliation becomes the street of:
Vindication.
The place where everyone said:
“Look how completely they lost”—
becomes the place where God says:
“Look again.”

16. The Celebration Stops

Verse 10 was filled with:
Celebration.
Gloating.
Presents.
Verse 11 contains none of:
That.
The party is:
Over.
John does not tell us what happens to the gifts.
He tells us what happens to the:
People.
They become:
Terrified.
That is quite a change in three and a half:
Days.

17. “Those Who Saw Them”

The same emphasis upon seeing:
Continues.
They saw the witnesses:
Dead.
Now they see them:
Alive.
This is not something occurring beyond human:
Observation.
Their vindication is:
Visible.
The world has to confront the reversal with its own:
Eyes.
What it thought was settled is no longer:
Settled.

18. “Were Affrighted”

Their response is not:

Joy.
Not repentance—at least John does not tell us that:
Here.
Not celebration.
It is:
Terror.
Why?
Because everything they thought the dead bodies meant has just been:
Overturned.
The beast's victory no longer looks so:
Certain.
The prophets' God no longer looks so:
Powerless.
And the testimony they celebrated silencing has suddenly received divine:
Confirmation.

19. Terror Is Not Necessarily Faith

We should be careful:
Here.
Fear can accompany genuine:
Repentance.
But fear itself is not the same as:
Faith.
John tells us the observers are:
Terrified.
That is what we can:
Say.
We should not automatically turn their terror into:
Conversion.
Nor should we assume more about their hearts than John has:
Revealed.
Our guardrail remains:
When Scripture stops speaking, we stop speaking:
Too.

20. Their Worst Fear Has Come True

Perhaps the witnesses were:
Right.
That is now the terrifying possibility confronting everyone who celebrated their:
Death.
For 1,260 days the prophets spoke.
The inhabitants of the earth rejected:
Them.
Then the beast killed them.

Surely that settled the:
Question.
But dead prophets do not normally:
Stand.
If God has raised His witnesses—
then perhaps their testimony deserves to be taken very:
Seriously.

21. God Vindicates His Witnesses

The witnesses do not vindicate:
Themselves.
They cannot.
They are:
Dead.
God vindicates:
Them.
That is important for every servant of:
God.
We can become consumed with defending our:
Reputation.
Proving ourselves.
Correcting every misunderstanding.
Answering every:
Critic.
Sometimes faithfulness means leaving vindication in God's:
Hands.
The witnesses could not defend themselves from the street.
God did not need their help.

22. Vindication Does Not Mean They Never Suffered

We should not misunderstand the:
Scene.
Their resurrection does not mean their suffering was:
Imaginary.
They really were:
Killed.
They really were:
Humiliated.
They really lay exposed.
God's vindication does not erase what:
Happened.
It reveals that what happened did not have the final:
Word.
Christian hope is not the denial of suffering.
It is the denial of suffering's claim to be:

Ultimate.

23. The Breath Is Stronger Than the Beast

The beast seemed extraordinarily powerful in Verse: 7
It made war.
Conquered.
Killed.
But now God does something the beast cannot:
Undo.
He gives:
Life.
No battle is described.
No struggle.
No prolonged contest between God and the:
Beast.
God sends the breath of:
Life.
The witnesses:
Stand.
That is all.
The contrast is almost:
Effortless.

24. Death Is Not God's Equal

Revelation never presents good and evil as two equally matched cosmic:
Forces.
God is not struggling desperately against the beast hoping somehow to:
Win.
The beast acts only within boundaries God:
Permits.
And when God chooses to give life—
death cannot:
Object.
The breath enters.
The witnesses stand.
The matter is:
Settled.

25. “Not Yet” Has Become “Now”

In Verse 9 we found an important:
Difference.
Not yet—
is not the same as:
Never.
For three and a half days resurrection was:
Not yet.

Now:
It is.
The waiting has ended.
The silence has ended.
The apparent defeat has ended.
What faith could only trust before—
eyes can now:
See.

26. The Story Turns Without Warning

Imagine being one of those:
Watching.
Nothing happens.
Then nothing happens.
Then nothing happens:
Again.
And suddenly:
Breath.
Movement.
Standing.
God does not owe the spectators advance:
Notice.
The reversal comes when His appointed time:
Arrives.
Sometimes God's answer seems sudden only because we could not see what He was doing during the:
Waiting.

27. Friday Did Not Become Sunday Gradually

The image we used in the previous verse becomes even more fitting:
Here.
Friday was:
Friday.
Saturday was:
Saturday.
Jesus was:
Dead.
Then came:
Sunday.
Resurrection did not slowly become true as circumstances gradually:
Improved.
God acted.
And everything:
Changed.
Sometimes hope arrives not as gradual improvement—

but as divine:
Interruption.

28. “But God”

There is a pattern throughout Scripture that can often be summarized with two:
Words.
But:
God.
Humanity rebels—
but God.
Joseph is betrayed—
but God.
Israel is trapped—
but God.
Christ is crucified—
but God.
The witnesses are dead—
but God.
The circumstances may be accurately described.
The loss may be completely:
Real.
But circumstances never become sovereign merely because they are:
Painful.
There is always the possibility of:
But God.

Pastoral Reflection

Some of us know what it feels like to live through the three and a half:
Days.
The time when nothing seems to:
Move.
The prayer appears unanswered.
The door remains:
Closed.
The loss remains:
Real.
And everyone—including perhaps ourselves—has begun deciding what the situation must:
Mean.
Then Revelation gives us this magnificent:
Word.
But.
Not because every earthly tragedy will be reversed in exactly the way we:
Want.

Not because every illness will be healed.
Not because every broken relationship will be restored.
Not because every loss will be returned before this earthly life is:
Over.
But because no circumstance gets to write the final sentence over those who belong to:
God.
Ultimately, resurrection stands at the center of Christian:
Hope.
The same God who breathed life into the witnesses is the God who raised Jesus from the:
Dead.
And because Christ lives, death itself has become a defeated:
Enemy.
So when we cannot see what comes next, perhaps faith can leave room for two words:
But God.

Something Worth Pondering

The world had three and a half days to stare at the:
Evidence.
The witnesses were:
Dead.
Everyone could see:
It.
The conclusion seemed:
Unavoidable.
Then the breath of life from God entered:
Them.
And they:
Stood.
The evidence had been real.
The conclusion had been:
Wrong.
Perhaps that is something worth remembering.
We can accurately describe our circumstances and still misunderstand what those circumstances ultimately:
Mean.
Faith does not ask us to deny what is in front of:
Us.
Faith simply refuses to believe that what is in front of us is all that God is able to:
Do.
The world looked at the bodies and said, "It is over."

God breathed and said, "Stand."

Ask Yourself This:

Have I ever mistaken what I can presently see for everything God can possibly do?
Can I trust God with my vindication rather than spending my life trying to prove myself to everyone who misunderstands me?
And when I find myself living in the three and a half days, can I leave room in my heart for two words:
But God?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:12

“And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”
— Revelation 11:12, KJV

The witnesses have:
Stood.
The world has gone from celebration to:
Terror.
And now a voice comes from:
Heaven.
Loud.
Clear.
Unmistakable.
“Come up hither”
The witnesses who had been left dead in the:
Street—
rise toward:
Heaven.
And John adds one final detail:
Their enemies:
Watch.
The people who watched them die—
watch them:
Rise.
The people who gazed upon their bodies—
watch them ascend.
The people who celebrated their humiliation—
witness their:
Vindication.
The world wanted a public:
Defeat.
God gives them a public:
Vindication.

1. “Then”

Once again John moves the story:
Forward.
“Then.”
The witnesses have been raised.
They stand on their:

Feet.
The spectators are:
Terrified.
But resurrection is not the final movement of their:
Vindication.
Something more:
Follows.
Heaven: Calls.

2. “They Heard”

The witnesses:
Hear.
That simple detail reminds us how completely the situation has:
Changed.
A few moments earlier they were dead.
Unable to hear.
Unable to move.
Unable to:
Respond.
Now they hear a voice from:
Heaven.
Life has been restored.
And with restored life comes another divine:
Command.

3. “A Great Voice”

John tells us the voice is:
Loud.
This is not a private:
Whisper.
The scene has been public from the:
Beginning.
Public testimony.
Public death.
Public humiliation.
Public resurrection.
And now:
A loud voice from heaven.
The God whose witnesses appeared abandoned is making His response impossible to:
Miss.

4. “From Heaven”

The direction matters.
The beast came up from the bottomless:
Pit.

The voice comes from:
Heaven.
The contrast is:
Striking.
From below came the power that:
Killed.
From above comes the voice that:
Calls.
The beast rises from the abyss.
The witnesses rise toward:
Heaven.
Revelation places the two movements beside one:
Another.
And there is no question where ultimate authority:
Resides.

5. “Come Up Hither”

The command is wonderfully:
Simple.
“Come up hither”
No elaborate ceremony.
No long explanation.
No negotiation.
Heaven:
Calls.
The witnesses:
Go.
The same God who commissioned their testimony now calls them into His:
Presence.
Their earthly assignment is:
Complete.
Their testimony has been:
Finished.
Their vindication has:
Begun.

6. The One Who Sent Them Now Receives Them

There is beautiful symmetry:
Here.
God gave them authority to:
Prophesy.
They carried out their:
Witness.
They finished their:
Testimony.

They were:
Killed.
God gave them:
Life.
And now heaven calls them:
Home.
The One who sent them into the world has not forgotten them when their work is:
Done.

7. Their Mission Was Completed Before Their Departure

Again we should remember Verse: 7
“And when they shall have finished their testimony...”
Only then did the beast kill:
Them.
Now heaven calls them:
Up.
Their departure is not an emergency evacuation from a failed:
Mission.
It is the conclusion of a completed:
One.
They are not being removed because God's plan went:
Wrong.
They are being received after God's purpose through them has been:
Fulfilled.

8. Our Prayer Returns Again

And here it is once:
More.
Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.
Verse 7:
The testimony is finished.
Verse 11:
The witnesses stand.
Verse 12:
Heaven calls.
There is something deeply comforting in that:
Sequence.
Faithfulness.
Completion.
Vindication.
Home.

9. “They Ascended up to Heaven”

The direction of their journey is:
Up.
They go to:
Heaven.
The world had denied them even a:
Tomb.
God gives them:
Heaven.
Think about that contrast.
Their enemies would not permit their bodies to be placed beneath the:
Ground.
God calls them above the:
Earth.
The world denied them burial.
God gave them:
Glory.

10. They Did Not Need the Tomb After All

Verse 9 now contains an almost beautiful:
Irony.
Their enemies refused to let them be placed in a:
Tomb.
At the time, that was intended as:
Humiliation.
But the witnesses did not ultimately need a:
Tomb.
Three and a half days later—
they:
Stand.
Then heaven says:
Come up hither.
The dignity their enemies withheld becomes insignificant beside the honor God:
Gives.

11. “In a Cloud”

John tells us they ascend:
“In a cloud.”
Cloud imagery carries enormous biblical:
Weight.
Throughout Scripture, clouds are repeatedly associated with divine presence and:
Glory.

And Christians cannot read of an ascent in a cloud without remembering the ascension of:
Jesus.
Again the witnesses' story echoes the story of their:
Lord.

12. Their Lord Walked This Road First

Verse 8 reminded us that their Lord was:
Crucified.
Now Verse 12 reminds us of another part of His:
Story.
Jesus was killed.
Jesus was raised.
Jesus:
Ascended.
The witnesses are killed.
The witnesses are raised.
The witnesses:
Ascend.
The servants follow the pattern of their:
Lord.

13. Faithful Witness Is Cruciform

That pattern tells us something about Christian:
Witness.
It is shaped by the:
Cross.
Not by worldly definitions of:
Success.
Jesus conquered as the:
Lamb.
The witnesses conquer through faithful:
Testimony.
The world may call that defeat.
Heaven calls it:
Faithfulness.
And heaven's verdict is the one that:
Lasts.

14. “Their Enemies Beheld Them”

And now John gives us the detail that makes the entire scene:
Complete.
Their enemies:
Watch.
Not their friends.
Not merely sympathetic:

Observers.
Their:
Enemies.
The people who wanted them dead now witness what God does with the people they:
Killed.

15. Public Humiliation Receives Public Vindication

Their humiliation had been:
Public.
Their bodies were displayed.
The nations gazed upon:
Them.
The inhabitants of the earth:
Celebrated.
So God does not vindicate them in:
Secret.
The same world that saw the apparent defeat sees the:
Reversal.
The street was public.
The resurrection is public.
The ascension is:
Public.

16. God Does Not Ask Their Enemies for Permission

There is no vote.
No appeal.
No negotiation.
The enemies do not approve the:
Ascension.
They simply:
Watch.
That is important.
God's verdict over His servants does not require the approval of those who opposed:
Them.
The world may disagree.
The enemies may resent it.
But when heaven says:
“Come up hither”—
earth cannot:
Veto it.

17. Vindication Belongs to God

There is a pastoral lesson here for anyone who has ever felt:
Misunderstood.

Falsely accused.
Dismissed.
Rejected.
We can spend enormous amounts of energy trying to make everyone understand:
Us.
Sometimes explanations are necessary.
Sometimes reconciliation should be:
Pursued.
Sometimes wrongs should be:
Corrected.
But there comes a point where we must entrust our final vindication to:
God.
The witnesses do not argue their case.
God raises:
Them.

18. You Do Not Need Everyone to Agree With God's Verdict

Their enemies remain their:
Enemies.
John does not tell us they suddenly apologize.
He does not tell us they admit:
We were wrong.
He tells us they:
Watch.
Sometimes God's vindication does not come through everyone finally agreeing that we were:
Right.
Sometimes the only verdict that matters is:
His.

19. The Witnesses Leave the Street Behind

For three and a half days the street defined their visible:
Condition.
Dead.
Exposed.
Humiliated.
Now the street becomes something beneath:
Them.
Literally.
They rise.
The place that seemed to define their defeat cannot hold them:
Anymore.
God has changed their:

Destination.

20. The Beast's Victory Keeps Shrinking

Look at what has happened to the beast's apparent:
Victory.
Verse 7:
It conquers and kills the witnesses.
Verse 8:
Their bodies lie in the street.
Verse 9:
The world watches.
Verse 10:
The world celebrates.
Verse 11:
The witnesses stand.
Verse 12:
They ascend to heaven.
The beast's great victory lasted three and a half:
Days.
God's vindication has already outlived:
It.

21. The Enemies Become Witnesses

There is another beautiful irony:
Here.
These are the enemies of the:
Witnesses.
But now they themselves become witnesses to the witnesses':
Vindication.
They see.
They cannot unsee.
They may reject the meaning.
They may resist the implications.
But they witnessed what:
Happened.
The people who rejected testimony are now confronted with:
Evidence.

22. Heaven Has the Final Word About Earthly Faithfulness

Earth said:
Defeated.
Heaven said:
Faithful.
Earth said:

Dead.
God said:
Stand.
Earth left them in the:
Street.
Heaven said:
Come up hither.
That is the theological movement of the entire:
Scene.
Earth's verdict was temporary.
Heaven's verdict is:
Final.

23. “Come Up Hither” Is Not Escape From an Unfinished Calling

This distinction matters.
The witnesses are not called away from work they were afraid to:
Finish.
They are called after the testimony has been:
Completed.
There is a difference between escaping a calling and completing:
One.
Faithfulness does not ask:
How quickly can I get out?
Faithfulness asks:
What has God given me to do while I am here?
And when the work is finished—
God handles the:
Homecoming.

24. Finishing Matters More Than Appearing Successful

By worldly standards, the witnesses' ministry might look:
Disastrous.
They angered people.
They were hated.
They were killed.
Their bodies were mocked.
Hardly the material for a modern success:
Seminar.
But heaven evaluates differently.
They finished their:
Testimony.
That is the measurement that:
Matters.
Not applause.

Not popularity.
Not survival.
Faithfulness.

25. The Cloud Points Beyond the Street

John's imagery takes our eyes from:
Below—
to:
Above.
Street.
Bodies.
Enemies.
Celebration.
Then:
Breath.
Standing.
Heaven.
Cloud.
The movement is deliberate.
Revelation continually teaches us to expand our field of:
Vision.
If we look only at the street, we see:
Defeat.
If we look toward heaven, we see:
Vindication.

26. Sometimes Faith Needs Its Field of Vision Expanded

That has been one of the lessons running throughout:
Revelation.
Sometimes faith endures until circumstances:
Change.
Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith endures all the way:
Home.
The witnesses have now done exactly:
That.
They remained faithful.
Their work was finished.
And heaven called them:
Home.

Pastoral Reflection

Most of us will never experience anything resembling the dramatic scene John describes:
Here.

But we understand the desire to be:
Vindicated.
We want people who misunderstood us to finally:
Understand.
We want those who judged us unfairly to finally say:
I was wrong.
We want the record:
Corrected.
Sometimes that happens.
Sometimes it:
Doesn't.
Revelation 11 reminds us that our ultimate vindication does not depend upon everyone else changing their:
Opinion.
The witnesses' enemies are still their:
Enemies.
They simply have to watch what God:
Does.
And perhaps there is freedom in realizing that we do not have to spend our lives winning every argument about:
Ourselves.
Our calling is to remain:
Faithful.
To finish the testimony God has given us.
To walk the road before:
Us.
And to leave the final verdict with:
Him.
Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.
And when the work is done—
we can trust God with the:
Homecoming.

Something Worth Pondering

The world left the witnesses in the street because it wanted their humiliation to be:
Visible.
God raised them in the same place.
Then He called them upward while their enemies:
Watched.
The very audience assembled to witness their defeat became the audience for their:
Vindication.
There is something beautifully fitting about:

That.
The world said:
Look at them.
God said:
Look again.
And perhaps that is enough.
We do not need to control the final verdict.
We need to remain faithful until the One who sent us says:
Come up hither.

Ask Yourself This:

Am I spending more energy trying to control what others think of me than faithfully doing what God has given me to do?
Can I trust God with my reputation when I have done what is right and still been misunderstood?
And if heaven's verdict were the only verdict I ever received, would that be enough?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:13

“And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”
— Revelation 11:13, KJV

“At that moment...”
The witnesses:
Rise.
Heaven calls:
“Come up hither”
They ascend in a:
Cloud.
Their enemies:
Watch.
And at that very:
Moment—
the earth:
Moves.
A great earthquake strikes.
A tenth of the city:
Falls.
Seven thousand people are:
Killed.
Those who remain are:
Terrified.
And they give glory to the God of:
Heaven.
The celebration of Verse 10 seems very far away:
Now.
The inhabitants of the earth had looked at the dead witnesses and concluded that the matter was:
Settled.
The prophets were dead.
The beast had won.
The world could:
Celebrate.
Then the prophets stood.
Then heaven called.
Then the earth:
Shook.

If there is a divine “Gotcha!” in the passage, it is not found in delight over human:
Suffering.
It is found in the collapse of human:
Certainty.
The world thought it knew who was in:
Control.
Verse 13 says:
Look again.

1. “And the Same Hour”

John connects the events:
Directly.
“At that moment...”
The witnesses ascend.
The earthquake:
Comes.
Their vindication and the shaking of the city belong to the same narrative:
Movement.
Heaven has rendered its verdict concerning the:
Witnesses.
Now the earth itself seems to respond.

2. The Earthquake Is “Great”

John does not describe a minor:
Tremor.
This is a:
“great earthquake.”
Earthquakes appear repeatedly in:
Revelation.
They accompany moments of divine:
Judgment.
They signal disruption.
Shaking.
The overturning of what appeared:
Stable.
And that symbolism fits this scene:
Perfectly.
Everything the inhabitants of the earth thought was secure has just been:
Shaken.

3. The World Thought the Witnesses Were the Problem

Remember Verse: 10
The two prophets had been a:
Torment.
So the world celebrated when they were:

Gone.
Problem:
Solved.
Remove the prophets.
Remove the:
Torment.
Silence the testimony.
Return to:
Normal.
Then the witnesses rise—
and the earth:
Shakes.
Perhaps the prophets were never the real:
Problem.

4. Silencing the Warning Does Not Remove the Danger

We found this image in Verse: 10
You can silence the alarm without extinguishing the:
Fire.
Verse 13 demonstrates the:
Point.
The witnesses were:
Silenced.
But God's judgment was not:
Cancelled.
The warning disappeared for three and a half:
Days.
The reality behind the warning:
Did not.
Destroying the messenger does not destroy the truth of the:
Message.

5. “A Tenth of the City Fell”

John gives us a measured amount:
A tenth.
The entire city does not:
Fall.
Judgment is severe.
But it is also:
Limited.
Once again Revelation gives us boundaries.
A tenth of the:
City.
Not all of:
It.

Even within judgment there remains a:
Restraint.
The shaking is devastating without being:
Total.

6. Revelation Keeps Giving Evil and Judgment Boundaries

We have seen this pattern repeatedly.
Forty-two:
Months.
1,260:
Days.
Three and a half:
Days.
A tenth of the:
City.
Revelation's numbers repeatedly remind us that events which feel overwhelming are still not:
Infinite.
They remain bounded.
Measured.
Known.
The world may feel out of:
Control.
But Revelation refuses to surrender the idea of divine:
Sovereignty.

7. Seven Thousand Are Killed

Then comes the hardest statement in the:
Verse.
Seven thousand people are killed in the:
Earthquake.
We should not hurry past:
That.
These are not merely numbers on a prophetic:
Chart.
They are human:
Lives.
Revelation's judgments are serious because rebellion against God is:
Serious.
There is nothing here that calls us to celebrate human:
Death.
The witnesses wore:
Sackcloth.

And perhaps we should read even these judgment scenes with something of the same:
Spirit.

8. Judgment Should Never Become Entertainment

This is particularly important when reading:
Revelation.
Its dramatic imagery can tempt us to become fascinated with:
Destruction.
How many?
How severe?
Who gets:
Hit?
When does it:
Happen?
But Revelation was not given so Christians could enjoy imagining the destruction of people they do not:
Like.
Judgment should produce:
Sobriety.
Humility.
Repentance.
And urgency in:
Witness.
Never:
Gloating.

9. The Church Must Not Imitate Verse 10

There is an uncomfortable contrast:
Here.
In Verse 10, the inhabitants of the earth celebrate the deaths of God's:
Witnesses.
If Christians respond to the deaths of God's enemies with the same delight—what has changed except the:
Target?
The witnesses wore sackcloth.
Their testimony included judgment.
But their posture was:
Mourning.
We must learn to speak seriously about judgment without learning to enjoy the thought of people experiencing:
It.

10. “The Remnant”

Not everyone is:
Killed.

John now turns our attention to:
“The rest.”
The survivors have witnessed extraordinary:
Things.
The witnesses dead.
The witnesses alive.
The witnesses ascending.
The earthquake.
The city:
Falling.
Death around:
Them.
And their response changes dramatically.

11. “Were Affrighted”

Once again:
Fear.
Verse 11 told us those who saw the witnesses stand were:
Terrified.
Verse 13 tells us the survivors of the earthquake are:
Terrified.
That is understandable.
Their entire interpretation of reality has collapsed along with part of the:
City.
The prophets they rejected have been:
Vindicated.
The God they resisted has demonstrated:
Power.
Fear follows.

12. Fear Can Break Through False Confidence

For three and a half days the inhabitants of the earth were:
Confident.
Confident enough to:
Celebrate.
Confident enough to exchange:
Presents.
Confident enough to treat the witnesses' bodies as trophies of:
Victory.
Now that confidence has:
Vanished.
Sometimes the first thing judgment destroys is not a building.
It is an:
Illusion.
The illusion that we are:

Untouchable.
The illusion that God does not:
See.
The illusion that our choices have no:
Consequences.

13. “And Gave Glory”

Then John tells us something:
Remarkable.
The survivors:
“gave glory”
to:
God.
That is a significant response.
Earlier judgments in Revelation repeatedly produced:
Refusal.
People would not:
Repent.
They continued in:
Rebellion.
Here something different appears to:
Happen.
They give glory to:
God.

14. But What Exactly Does That Mean?

We need our interpretive guardrail:
Here.
Does giving glory to God mean genuine:
Repentance?
Possibly.
Some interpreters understand the statement that:
Way.
Others point out that recognizing God's power is not necessarily the same as entering into saving:
Faith.
John does not explicitly say:
“They repented.”
He says:
“They gave glory to the God of heaven.”
That is important.
And we should allow those words to say exactly what they:
Say.

15. We Do Not Need to Settle What John Does Not Settle

This is another place where curiosity can outrun the:

Text.
We might want John to tell us precisely what happened within every survivor's:
Heart.
He does:
Not.
So we can say:
They were terrified.
They gave glory to God.
And then we:
Stop.
When Scripture stops speaking, we stop speaking too.

16. "The God of Heaven"

Notice the title:
"The God of heaven."
The inhabitants of the earth give glory to the God of:
Heaven.
That contrast fits the whole:
Scene.
The beast rose from the:
Abyss.
The witnesses stood upon the:
Earth.
A voice called from:
Heaven.
The witnesses ascended toward:
Heaven.
Now those remaining on earth acknowledge the God of:
Heaven.
The vertical imagery throughout the passage is:
Striking.

17. Earthly Power Has Met Heavenly Authority

The beast appeared powerful.
The city appeared powerful.
The inhabitants of the earth appeared:
Confident.
But earthly power has now encountered heavenly:
Authority.
The result is:
Shaking.
The city falls.
The survivors tremble.
And glory is directed toward:

God.
The entire hierarchy of power has been:
Rearranged.

18. The Great Reversal Is Complete

Consider the movement from Verse: 7
The beast conquers the:
Witnesses.
Verse 8:
Their bodies lie in the:
Street.
Verse 9:
The nations gaze upon:
Them.
Verse 10:
The world:
Celebrates.
Verse 11:
The witnesses:
Stand.
Verse 12:
They ascend while their enemies:
Watch.
Verse 13:
The city:
Shakes.
The people are:
Terrified.
And glory goes to:
God.
That is quite a:
Reversal.

19. The “Gotcha” Is Really About Presumption

If we use our little phrase—
God's:
“Gotcha!”—
we should understand where the humor lies.
Not in seven thousand people:
Dying.
There is nothing amusing about:
That.
The irony lies in human:
Presumption.
The world had thrown the victory party before the final result was:

In.
They had exchanged gifts before God had finished:
Speaking.
They had declared the witnesses defeated while heaven still had another:
Verse.
The “Gotcha” is:
You thought the story was over.
It:
Wasn't.

20. Never Hold the Victory Party Too Early

That may be one of the great lessons of this:
Section.
Verse 10 is the world's premature victory:
Party.
Verse 13 is the collapse of the assumptions behind:
It.
We should be very careful about declaring final outcomes in stories that still belong to:
God.
What appears dead may yet:
Stand.
What appears victorious may soon:
Fall.
What appears silent may simply be waiting for God's next:
Word.

21. God Is Not Mocked by Human Certainty

Human beings often speak with extraordinary confidence about things they cannot possibly:
Know.
God will never:
Act.
This situation can never:
Change.
That person is completely:
Finished.
The Church is:
Finished.
Hope is:
Gone.
The story is:
Over.
Revelation repeatedly confronts that kind of:
Certainty.

Human beings see a moment.
God sees the:
Whole.

22. The Witnesses Do Not Cause Their Own Vindication

Notice again how little the witnesses do in this:
Scene.
God gives them:
Life.
God calls them:
Up.
The earthquake:
Comes.
The witnesses do not orchestrate their:
Vindication.
They do not stand over their enemies saying:
We told you so.
That is important.
Vindication belongs to:
God.

23. There Is No "I Told You So" From the Witnesses

Perhaps this is worth:
Noticing.
After everything done to them—
the war.
The killing.
The humiliation.
The celebration—
the witnesses are given no speech of:
Revenge.
No:
"I told you so."
No taunting.
No gloating.
They simply:
Rise.
And answer heaven's:
Call.
That may be one of the strongest pictures of vindication in the entire:
Passage.
They do not need to rub it:
In.
God has already made the point.

24. Sometimes the Best Vindication Requires No Speech

There are moments when we desperately want the opportunity to say:
See?
I was:
Right.
You were:
Wrong.
But the witnesses never get that:
Speech.
Perhaps they do not need:
It.
Their standing says:
Enough.
Their ascension says:
Enough.
God's action says:
Enough.
Sometimes when God has vindicated, adding our own gloating only makes the moment:
Smaller.

25. Glory Goes to God—Not the Witnesses

This may be the most important ending in the:
Verse.
The survivors do not give glory to the:
Witnesses.
They give glory to:
God.
That is exactly where faithful witness should ultimately:
Lead.
The witnesses are extraordinary.
Their ministry is extraordinary.
Their resurrection is extraordinary.
But they are never the final:
Destination.
The testimony points beyond the:
Witnesses—
to:
God.

26. A Faithful Witness Does Not Need to Become the Hero

This is a temptation in every kind of:
Ministry.

We want people to remember:
Us.
Quote:
Us.
Admire:
Us.
Recognize what we:
Did.
But faithful witness points beyond:
Itself.
John the Baptist said it beautifully:
He must increase.
I must:
Decrease.
The Two Witnesses disappear upward.
The glory remains with:
God.

27. The Earthquake Shakes More Than Buildings

A tenth of the city:
Falls.
But something else collapses:
Too.
Certainty.
Arrogance.
The assumption that the beast had:
Won.
The belief that the witnesses were:
Finished.
The conviction that heaven had nothing more to:
Say.
Sometimes God shakes the structures around us.
Sometimes He shakes the assumptions within:
Us.
Both can be:
Uncomfortable.
Both can reveal what was never as secure as we:
Imagined.

Pastoral Reflection

There are moments when we become very certain about how the story is going to:
End.
We look at the evidence.
We examine the circumstances.

We draw our:
Conclusion.
Finished.
Impossible.
Too late.
Never going to:
Change.
And sometimes God seems to smile and say:
Watch this.
Not because suffering is:
Funny.
Not because judgment is:
Funny.
Not because human loss should ever become the object of:
Gloating.
But because human certainty can become almost absurd when placed beside the sovereignty of:
God.
The inhabitants of the earth had exchanged:
Presents.
They were celebrating the end of the:
Witnesses.
Three and a half days later, those witnesses were alive, ascending toward heaven, and the earth beneath the celebration was:
Shaking.
Perhaps faith needs enough humility to admit:
I do not know what God may do next.
And enough confidence to say:
Whatever happens next, He is still:
God.

Something Worth Pondering

The witnesses never say:
“I told you so.”
They do not have:
To.
They stand.
They ascend.
The earth shakes.
And the survivors give glory to:
God.
Perhaps there is a lesson in:
That.

When God vindicates us, we do not need to turn His vindication into our opportunity for:
Revenge.
We do not need to gloat.
We do not need to humiliate those who were:
Wrong.
We can simply allow God to be:
God.
The world said:
The witnesses are finished.
God said:
Stand.
The world watched them ascend.
The earth shook.
And glory went where it had belonged all:
Along.
To:
God.

Ask Yourself This:

Have I ever been so certain about how a situation would end that I left no room for God to surprise me?
When God vindicates me, can I resist the temptation to say, "I told you so," and allow the glory to remain with Him?
And when something in my life is shaken, can I ask whether God may also be shaking an assumption I have trusted more than I should?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:14

“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.”
— Revelation 11:14, KJV

And just like:
That—
the section:
Ends.
The witnesses have:
Prophesied.
Finished their testimony.
Been killed.
Lain in the street.
Been mocked.
Been celebrated over.
Received the breath of life from:
God.
Stood.
Ascended.
And the earth has:
Shaken.
Now John gives us two short:
Sentences.
“The second woe is past.”
“The third woe cometh quickly.”
One has:
Passed.
Another is:
Coming.
The vision does not:
Stop.
The seventh trumpet is almost:
Here.

1. “The Second Woe”

To understand this sentence, we need to remember where the woes:
Began.
Back in Chapter 8, after the first four trumpets, the eagle cried:
“Woe, woe, woe”
to the inhabitants of the:
Earth.
Three woes.

Three remaining:
Trumpets.
The fifth trumpet brought the first:
Woe.
The sixth trumpet brought the second.
And now John tells us:
The second woe has: Passed.

2. The Second Woe Has Been a Long Journey

That simple statement closes a surprisingly large portion of the:
Vision.
The sixth trumpet sounded back in Chapter: 9
Since then we have encountered:
The four angels bound at the Euphrates.
The enormous mounted forces.
Humanity's continued refusal to repent.
The mighty angel.
The little book.
John eating the scroll.
The command to prophesy again.
The measuring of the temple.
The Two Witnesses.
Their testimony.
Their death.
Their resurrection.
Their ascension.
The earthquake.
And now:
“The second woe is past.”
What seemed like an interruption was part of the:
Movement.

3. Revelation Does Not Always Move in a Straight Line

This is important for reading the:
Book.
We might expect:
Sixth trumpet.
Then immediately:
Seventh trumpet.
Instead John slows:
Down.
The vision expands.
Images appear.
John receives another commission.
Witnesses prophesy.

A beast appears.
The witnesses die and:
Rise.
Only now does John tell us that the second woe has:
Passed.
Revelation is not interested merely in moving us quickly through a prophetic:
Schedule.
It wants us to understand what faithful endurance looks like within the:
Story.

4. The Delay Was Not a Detour

Everything between the sixth and seventh trumpets might initially feel like an:
Interruption.
But it is not wasted:
Space.
The little book matters.
John's recommissioning matters.
The measuring matters.
The witnesses:
Matter.
Their testimony matters.
Their suffering matters.
Their vindication matters.
Before the seventh trumpet sounds, Revelation has shown us what it means to remain faithful while the world is being:
Shaken.

5. “Is Past”

There is something almost comforting about those two:
Words.
“Has passed.”
The woe was:
Real.
Terrible.
Painful.
But it:
Passed.
It did not last:
Forever.
Revelation keeps reminding us that evil and suffering have:
Boundaries.
Forty-two months.
1,260 days.
Three and a half days.

And now:
The second woe has passed.

6. Woes Have an Expiration Date

That may be worth:
Remembering.
The kingdom of God is:
Eternal.
The woes are:
Not.
The reign of God is:
Forever.
The suffering described in Revelation is:
Not.
The Lamb remains.
The throne remains.
God remains.
The woe:
Passes.
That difference is at the heart of Christian:
Hope.

7. "Passed" Does Not Mean It Was Insignificant

We should not confuse temporary with:
Unimportant.
The second woe brought terrible:
Judgment.
People suffered.
People died.
The witnesses were:
Killed.
The city was:
Shaken.
The fact that something passes does not mean it did not:
Matter.
Some seasons of life leave scars long after they have:
Passed.
But scars are evidence that something was survived.
They are not evidence that it still:
Reigns.

8. Some Things Are Meant to Pass

There are things in Revelation that remain:
Forever.
God.
The Lamb.

The kingdom.
Worship.
Life.
The New Jerusalem.
And there are things destined to:
Pass.
Woe.
Death.
Mourning.
Crying.
Pain.
Babylon.
The beast.
The dragon.
Revelation continually asks us:
Which kind of thing are you looking at?
Permanent—
or:
Passing?

9. Faith Must Learn the Difference

That distinction matters when we are inside the:
Woe.
Temporary suffering rarely feels temporary while we are experiencing:
It.
Three and a half days can feel like:
Forever.
Forty-two months can feel like:
Forever.
A season of grief can feel like:
Forever.
But Revelation repeatedly places limits around what appears:
Endless.
Faith does not deny the pain.
Faith remembers that pain does not possess:
Eternity.

10. But John Gives Us Almost No Time to Celebrate

“The second woe is past.”
Wonderful.
Then immediately:
“The third woe cometh quickly.”
Well—
that celebration did not last:
Long.

John does not allow us to settle comfortably into:
Relief.
One woe has passed.
Another is:
Coming.
The story is still moving toward its:
Climax.

11. “The Third Woe”

The third woe corresponds with the seventh:
Trumpet.
We have been waiting for this trumpet since Chapter: 8
Six trumpets have sounded.
Now only one:
Remains.
And John prepares us:
The third woe is coming.
The seventh trumpet is:
Next.

12. But the Seventh Trumpet Will Surprise Us

If we hear the word:
“Woe”—
we might expect nothing but:
Disaster.
Destruction.
Terror.
Yet when the seventh angel sounds the trumpet, the first thing John will hear is:
Heaven.
Loud voices.
And one of the greatest declarations in all of:
Revelation.
The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His:
Christ.
That is an interesting way to introduce a:
Woe.

13. Woe for Whom?

That raises an important question as we move:
Forward.
If the seventh trumpet announces the reign of:
God—
why is it a:
Woe?

Perhaps because the coming of God's kingdom is wonderful news for those who belong to:
Him—
and terrible news for everything that stands against:
Him.
The same kingdom can mean:
Deliverance—
and:
Judgment.
Everything depends upon where one's allegiance:
Lies.

14. The Kingdom Is Good News—and a Threat

We sometimes speak of God's kingdom only as:
Comfort.
And it certainly is.
But God's kingdom also means the end of every rival:
Kingdom.
Every unjust power.
Every false authority.
Every oppressive system.
Every rebellion.
Every claim to sovereignty that belongs only to:
God.
The coming kingdom comforts the oppressed precisely because it ends the rule of the:
Oppressor.

15. “Is Coming”

John's language looks:
Forward.
The third woe:
“is coming.”
Revelation constantly lives between what God has already:
Done—
and what God is still going to:
Do.
Christ has conquered.
And the kingdom is still:
Coming.
The Lamb reigns.
And the world still:
Rebels.
The witnesses have been vindicated.
And the final victory has not yet been fully:

Revealed.
We live in that tension:
Too.

16. Already—and Not Yet

Christian faith has always lived within this:
Tension.
Christ has:
Come.
Christ will:
Come.
The kingdom has:
Begun.
The kingdom will be:
Completed.
Death has been defeated.
Yet people still:
Die.
Victory has been won.
Yet the battle still:
Continues.
Revelation does not ask us to eliminate that tension.
It teaches us how to live faithfully:
Within it.

17. "Very Soon"

John adds urgency:
"very soon."
The next movement is not distant within the:
Vision.
The seventh trumpet is ready to:
Sound.
The reader is being carried forward.
No long pause.
No comfortable:
Intermission.
The kingdom proclamation is almost:
Here.

18. Revelation Keeps Us Moving

There is something pastoral about the relentless forward movement of the:
Book.
We are never allowed to build a permanent home inside one terrible:
Scene.
The seals move:
Forward.

The trumpets move:
Forward.
The woes move:
Forward.
The witnesses move from testimony to death to resurrection to:
Heaven.
History itself is moving:
Somewhere.
Revelation is not a circle.
It has a:
Destination.

19. God Is Taking the Story Somewhere

That destination matters.
The world may look chaotic.
Beasts rise.
Empires rage.
Witnesses die.
Cities shake.
But Revelation insists that history is not wandering:
Aimlessly.
The story is moving toward the reign of:
God.
Toward judgment.
Toward vindication.
Toward renewal.
Toward:
Home.

20. One Woe Passes, but God Remains

This may be the simplest truth in the:
Verse.
The woe:
Passes.
God:
Remains.
The witnesses' suffering passes.
Their belonging to God:
Remains.
The beast's apparent victory passes.
The witnesses' testimony:
Remains.
The world's celebration passes.
God's verdict:
Remains.

What passes should never be given the same weight as what:
Remains.

21. Endurance Depends Upon Knowing What Is Temporary

Perhaps this is one reason Revelation speaks so often about:
Endurance.
We can endure something differently when we know it does not last:
Forever.
That does not make it:
Easy.
But it gives suffering a:
Horizon.
The Church can endure the beast because the beast is:
Temporary.
The Church can endure Babylon because Babylon will:
Fall.
The Church can endure death because death itself will:
Die.

22. Faith Must Endure Between the Woes

And here our series title fits almost:
Perfectly.
When Faith Must Endure.
Verse 14 describes exactly that kind of:
World.
One woe has:
Passed.
Another is:
Coming.
What does faith do in:
Between?
It remains:
Faithful.
It witnesses.
It worships.
It trusts.
It waits.
It endures.

23. Endurance Is Not Passive

The Two Witnesses have shown us:
That.
They did not endure by:
Hiding.

They:
Prophesied.
They spoke.
They confronted.
They remained faithful.
They finished their:
Testimony.
Biblical endurance is not merely hanging on until something:
Stops.
It is continuing to do what God has given us to do while we:
Wait.

24. The Next Sound Will Be a Trumpet

Verse 14 ends with:
Anticipation.
The third woe is coming very:
Soon.
And the reader knows what that:
Means.
The seventh angel is about to:
Sound.
After everything we have seen—
we are about to hear heaven announce what all of Revelation has been moving:
Toward.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
The Lamb reigns.
And no beast, empire, city, or power can prevent the:
Outcome.

Pastoral Reflection

Some seasons of life seem to move from one difficulty directly into:
Another.
We finally say:
Thank God that is over.
And before we can catch our:
Breath—
something else:
Comes.
Verse 14 understands that kind of:
World.
The second woe has passed.
The third is coming very:
Soon.

That might sound discouraging.
But Revelation gives us another way to hear:
It.
The important thing is not merely that another woe is:
Coming.
The important thing is that the story is still moving:
Forward.
The second woe:
Passed.
The third will pass:
Too.
But God will:
Remain.
And perhaps endurance grows when we learn to distinguish between what is passing through our lives and what will remain when everything else is:
Gone.
The woe passes.
God remains.
That is enough to keep walking.

Something Worth Pondering

Verse 14 stands between two enormous:
Scenes.
Behind it:
The witnesses.
Their testimony.
Their death.
Their resurrection.
Their ascension.
Ahead of it:
The seventh trumpet.
The kingdom proclaimed.
The worship of heaven.
The reign of:
God.
And between those two scenes John gives us only:
"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."
Perhaps faith often lives in sentences like:
That.
Something difficult has:
Passed.
Something unknown lies:
Ahead.
And we stand in:

Between.
We cannot return to what was.
We cannot yet see everything that will:
Be.
So we do what the witnesses taught us to:
Do.
Remain faithful.
Finish the testimony.
Trust the One who holds the:
Clock.
And pray:
Lord, keep me faithful until the work You have given me is done.

Ask Yourself This:

Am I treating something temporary as though it has the right to define my entire life?
When one difficult season ends and another begins, can I remember that God remains unchanged through both?
And while I wait for what comes next, am I still faithfully doing the work God has given me to do?

The Seventh Trumpet and the Kingdom Proclaimed

Revelation 11:15–19

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

> **Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.**

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”
— Revelation 11:15–19, KJV

The seventh trumpet finally:
Sounds.
We have been waiting for this moment since the trumpet sequence began in Chapter: 8
Six trumpets have sounded.
Judgment has fallen.
Creation has been shaken.
Human rebellion has been exposed.
The mighty angel has descended.
John has eaten the little book.
The temple has been measured.
The Two Witnesses have testified.
They have been killed.
Raised.
Vindicated.
Called to:
Heaven.

The earth has:
Shaken.
The second woe has:
Passed.
And now—
the seventh angel lifts the trumpet and:
Blows.
What comes next might surprise:
Us.
After everything we have seen, we might expect another immediate scene of:
Destruction.
Instead we hear:
Voices.
Loud voices in:
Heaven.
And those voices announce what Revelation has been telling us from the:
Beginning.
God:
Reigns.
The kingdom belongs to:
Him.
The Messiah reigns.
And His reign will never:
End.
From the perspective of earth, the world still appears:
Contested.
Beasts will still:
Rise.
Babylon will still:
Boast.
The dragon will still:
Rage.
The saints will still be called to:
Endure.
But heaven is not uncertain about where the story is:
Going.
The seventh trumpet does not merely announce another event.
It announces the meaning of:
History.
The world belongs to:
God.
And everything that opposes Him is living on borrowed:
Time.

1. The Seventh Trumpet Sounds

The trumpet we have been anticipating finally:
Sounds.
This is the last of the seven:
Trumpets.
The sequence has reached its:
Climax.
And because Revelation 11:14 identified what follows as the third:
Woe—
we are prepared for something terrible.
Yet the first thing John hears is not screaming from:
Earth.
He hears worship from:
Heaven.
That tells us immediately that the seventh trumpet must be understood from a larger:
Perspective.

2. Heaven Interprets Earth

This is one of Revelation's most important:
Patterns.
Earth gives us one interpretation of:
Events.
Heaven gives us:
Another.
Earth says:
The beast has power.
Heaven says:
The Lamb reigns.
Earth says:
The witnesses are defeated.
Heaven says:
Come up hither.
Earth says:
The kingdoms of this world belong to those strong enough to control them.
Heaven says:
They belong to God.
Revelation repeatedly takes us behind the visible world so we can see reality from the perspective of:
Heaven.

3. Loud Voices in Heaven

The announcement is not:
Tentative.
The voices are:

Loud.
There is no uncertainty.
No whispered speculation.
No heavenly committee wondering how history might:
Turn out.
Heaven speaks with:
Confidence.
The outcome is not in:
Doubt.

4. “The Kingdoms of This World”

The KJV uses the plural:
The kingdoms of this world.
Every earthly claim to rule must face one ultimate:
Reality.
Empires.
Governments.
Cultures.
Economic systems.
Military powers.
Human structures of authority.
Behind all their differences stands the same fundamental:
Question.
Who ultimately has the right to:
Rule?
The seventh trumpet gives heaven's:
Answer.

5. “Are Become”

The language is striking.
Heaven announces the kingdom as though the victory has already been:
Accomplished.
Yet Revelation is not:
Finished.
The dragon still awaits us.
The beasts still await us.
Babylon still awaits:
Us.
Judgment still awaits:
Us.
So why speak this way?
Because heaven's certainty about God's victory is so complete that the future can be proclaimed as:
Settled.
What God has purposed cannot finally be:

Stopped.

6. The World Was Never Truly Up for Grabs

This is important.
God does not eventually become sovereign because He manages to defeat powerful:
Competitors.
He is already:
Lord.
The seventh trumpet reveals the removal of every competing claim to:
Rule.
The world was never ultimately the beast's.
Never ultimately Babylon's.
Never ultimately Caesar's.
Never ultimately ours.
It belongs to:
God.

7. “Our Lord, and of His Christ”

The reign belongs to:
God—
and to His:
Messiah.
The Lamb who appeared slain is not a secondary figure in the:
Story.
He shares in the divine:
Reign.
The One the world crucified is the One through whom God's kingdom is:
Established.
Once again Revelation overturns worldly definitions of:
Power.
The throne belongs to the:
Lamb.

8. The Cross Was Not a Detour From the Throne

This is one of Revelation's deepest:
Truths.
Jesus does not become victorious despite having been:
Slain.
He conquers as the:
Lamb.
The cross is not an embarrassing interruption in the Messiah's rise to:
Power.
It reveals what God's power looks:
Like.
Self-giving.

Faithful.
Holy.
Redemptive.
The Lamb reigns because the Lamb has:
Conquered.

9. “He Will Reign Forever and Ever”

Now we encounter something entirely different from the:
Woes.
The woes:
Pass.
The kingdom:
Remains.
The beast rises and:
Falls.
Babylon rises and:
Falls.
Empires rise and:
Fall.
Human rulers come and:
Go.
But the reign of God and His Messiah is:
Forever.
And ever.
No expiration:
Date.
No successor.
No rival kingdom waiting in the:
Wings.
Forever.

10. This Is Why the Church Can Endure

Now our series title comes into focus:
Again.
When Faith Must Endure.
Why can faith:
Endure?
Not because circumstances are always:
Favorable.
Not because witnesses are always:
Protected from suffering.
Not because evil never appears to:
Win.
Faith endures because it knows which kingdom will still be standing when every temporary power has:

Passed.

11. The Twenty-Four Elders Respond

The heavenly announcement produces:
Worship.
The twenty-four elders who sit before God fall on their:
Faces.
That posture tells us everything.
The proper response to God's reign is not merely:
Analysis.
It is:
Worship.
Revelation gives us theology that repeatedly ends on our:
Knees.

12. They Leave Their Thrones for the Floor

There is something beautiful in the:
Picture.
The elders have:
Thrones.
Yet when God's reign is proclaimed, they fall on their:
Faces.
Their own seats of honor become insignificant before the throne of:
God.
True worship does not make us more impressed with our own:
Importance.
It puts our importance into proper:
Perspective.

13. They Give Thanks

Their worship begins with:
Thanksgiving.
They thank the Lord God:
Almighty.
The One who is.
And who:
Was.
God has not changed.
The same God who sat upon the throne when the seals were opened remains upon the throne when the seventh trumpet:
Sounds.
History changes.
God does:
Not.

14. “Thou Hast Taken to Thee Thy Great Power”

The elders celebrate God's decisive exercise of:
Rule.
This does not mean God previously lacked:
Power.
It means the time has come for His sovereign reign to be openly and decisively:
Manifested.
What heaven always knew is becoming impossible for creation to:
Ignore.
God reigns.

15. “And Hast Reigned”

Again we encounter the tension between what has always been true and what is being openly:
Revealed.
God has always been:
King.
Yet Revelation looks toward the moment when every rival claim is finally:
Removed.
His reign becomes universally:
Manifest.
No beast.
No Babylon.
No dragon.
No competing:
Throne.

16. The Nations Were Angry

The elders then look toward the response of the:
Nations.
They:
Raged.
That language carries echoes of the Psalms.
Humanity resists God's:
Rule.
The nations do not calmly surrender their claims.
They:
Rage.
But human rage cannot overturn divine:
Sovereignty.
Noise is not the same thing as:
Power.

17. Human Anger Meets Divine Judgment

The nations rage.
God's wrath:
Comes.
Those two things should not be treated as moral:
Equals.
Human rage arises in resistance to God's rightful:
Rule.
Divine wrath is God's holy response to:
Evil.
Revelation does not present God as losing His temper.
Judgment is not divine:
Irritability.
It is the holy opposition of God toward everything that destroys what He:
Loves.

18. The Time for Judgment Has Come

The elders announce that the time has arrived for the dead to be:
Judged.
Revelation keeps moving toward final:
Accountability.
History is not merely a sequence of events.
It moves toward:
Judgment.
What we do:
Matters.
How we live:
Matters.
Whom we worship:
Matters.
The world is morally accountable to its:
Creator.

19. Judgment Means Evil Does Not Get the Last Word

We sometimes hear judgment only as:
Threat.
But for those who have suffered injustice, judgment is also:
Hope.
If there is no final judgment, then some evil is never finally:
Answered.
Some cruelty is never finally:
Named.
Some victims are never finally:
Vindicated.
The judgment of God means evil will not disappear into history without an:

Answer.
God sees.
God knows.
God judges:
Justly.

20. Reward Is Also Announced

The seventh trumpet does not speak only of:
Judgment.
It speaks of:
Reward.
God's servants.
The prophets.
The saints.
Those who fear His name.
Small and:
Great.
God remembers His:
People.
The world may forget them.
History may overlook them.
Their names may never appear in books.
But God:
Knows.

21. "Small and Great"

That phrase deserves attention.
Small.
Great.
The kingdom does not operate according to human measures of:
Importance.
Famous or:
Unknown.
Powerful or:
Ordinary.
Public ministry or quiet:
Faithfulness.
God's recognition is not limited to those whose names everyone else:
Knows.
He sees the small.
He sees the great.
He sees:
Faithfulness.

22. The Witnesses Fit Right Here

It is difficult not to think about the Two Witnesses we have just:

Seen.
They testified.
Suffered.
Died.
Were:
Vindicated.
Now heaven announces reward for God's servants and:
Prophets.
Their story has prepared us to hear the seventh trumpet:
Correctly.
Faithfulness may look defeated on earth.
Heaven does not forget:
It.

23. Those Who Destroy the Earth

Then comes another side of:
Judgment.
God will destroy those who destroy the:
Earth.
The wording is deliberately:
Sobering.
Human rebellion is not harmless.
Sin destroys.
Violence destroys.
Oppression destroys.
Idolatrous systems destroy.
Humanity was given creation as a:
Gift.
Those who ravage what belongs to God will answer to the One to whom it:
Belongs.

24. God Cares About What Happens to His Creation

That statement should keep us from treating the physical world as though it does not:
Matter.
Creation belongs to:
God.
Revelation will ultimately move not toward God's abandonment of creation—
but toward its:
Renewal.
A new heaven.
A new earth.
God does not discard what He:
Made.

He redeems.
Restores.
Makes all things:
New.

25. Then the Temple in Heaven Opens

The scene moves again.
God's temple in heaven is:
Opened.
And within the temple something becomes:
Visible.
The ark of His:
Covenant.
For readers formed by Israel's Scriptures, that image carries enormous:
Weight.
Presence.
Covenant.
Holiness.
Faithfulness.
The God who judges is also the God who:
Remembers.

26. The Ark Points to Covenant Faithfulness

The ark is not merely an interesting piece of heavenly:
Furniture.
It evokes God's covenant relationship with His:
People.
At the climax of the trumpet sequence, John sees a sign associated with God's covenant:
Faithfulness.
That matters.
The judgments of Revelation do not occur because God has forgotten His:
Promises.
They unfold while God remains faithful to:
Them.

27. God Has Not Forgotten His People

This has been one of the great questions underneath the entire:
Section.
The saints suffer.
The witnesses die.
The world rages.
Has God:
Forgotten?
The open temple says:
No.

The ark says:
No.
The throne says:
No.
The resurrection of the witnesses said:
No.
God remembers His:
Covenant.

28. The Chapter Ends With Theophanic Signs

Flashes of:
Lightning.
Rumbling.
Peals of:
Thunder.
An earthquake.
Heavy:
Hail.
These are not quiet:
Images.
They recall manifestations of divine presence and:
Power.
The chapter that began with measuring ends with heaven:
Open.
The chapter that showed witnesses apparently defeated ends with the unmistakable presence of:
God.

29. The Seventh Trumpet Does Not End Revelation

This is important for how we read what comes:
Next.
The seventh trumpet sounds.
The kingdom is proclaimed.
But Revelation still has eleven chapters:
Remaining.
John is not simply giving us a chronological stopwatch where one event finishes and the next begins in a neat modern:
Timeline.
The visions revisit the conflict from different perspectives and carry us deeper into its:
Meaning.
Chapter 12 will open another window.

30. We Are About to See the Conflict Behind the Conflict

So far we have seen:
Empires.

Judgments.
Witnesses.
Human rebellion.
But beginning in Chapter 12, John will take us behind those visible realities into the cosmic:
Conflict.
The woman.
The dragon.
The child.
War in:
Heaven.
The beasts.
The struggle we have witnessed on earth has a deeper spiritual:
Dimension.
Revelation is about to show it to:
Us.

31. But Before the Dragon Appears, God Declares the Ending

This may be one of the most important structural features of the:
Book.
Before John introduces us fully to the dragon and the beasts—
he tells us who:
Wins.
Before the conflict is described in greater detail, heaven announces the final:
Outcome.
The kingdom belongs to God and His:
Messiah.
That means we will read everything that follows from the perspective of an already announced:
Victory.

32. We Meet the Dragon Knowing He Loses

That changes how we read the next:
Section.
The dragon may appear terrifying.
The beasts may appear powerful.
Babylon may appear irresistible.
But we have already heard the seventh:
Trumpet.
We already know where the story:
Ends.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
The Lamb:

Reigns.
Everything else is:
Temporary.

33. Revelation Gives Us the Ending So We Can Endure the Middle

Perhaps that is one of the greatest pastoral purposes of the:
Book.
God tells His people where the story is going so they can remain faithful while living through the:
Middle.
We may not understand every event.
We may not know how long a season will:
Last.
We may not see how God will resolve every:
Problem.
But we know the destination.
And sometimes knowing the destination is enough to keep walking the:
Road.

34. The Seventh Trumpet Is a Declaration of Hope

Yes, it belongs to the:
Woes.
Yes, it announces:
Judgment.
But for the faithful, its dominant note is:
Hope.
The kingdom comes.
The Messiah reigns.
The servants are remembered.
The saints are rewarded.
Destroyers are judged.
The covenant is remembered.
Heaven is:
Opened.
This is not the announcement that chaos has:
Won.
It is the announcement that chaos has an expiration:
Date.

35. Chapter 11 Ends Where Faith Must Always End

Not with the:
Beast.
Not with the:
Bodies.

Not with the:
Earthquake.
Not with the:
Woe.
But with:
God.
His kingdom.
His reign.
His judgment.
His reward.
His covenant.
His:
Presence.
That is where faithful endurance ultimately fixes its:
Eyes.

Pastoral Reflection

There are times when the world looks anything but:
Governed.
Violence erupts.
Nations rage.
People suffer.
Faithful witnesses are ignored, opposed, or:
Silenced.
The wrong people seem to:
Prosper.
The right thing seems to:
Lose.
And if we judge reality only by what we can see from:
Earth—
we may begin to wonder whether anyone is really in:
Control.
Then the seventh trumpet:
Sounds.
And heaven tells us what earth cannot always:
See.
God reigns.
The Lamb reigns.
The kingdom is:
Coming.
Justice will not be forgotten.
Faithfulness will not be forgotten.
Suffering will not last:
Forever.

Evil will not reign:
Forever.
Death will not reign:
Forever.
The beast will not reign:
Forever.
Babylon will not reign:
Forever.
The woe passes.
God remains.
And perhaps that is why Revelation keeps taking us back to the throne.
Because sometimes faith does not need every mystery:
Explained.
Sometimes faith does not need every circumstance immediately:
Changed.
Sometimes faith needs its field of vision:
Expanded.
We need to see beyond the street.
Beyond the beast.
Beyond the earthquake.
Beyond the present:
Woe.
To the throne.
To the Lamb.
To the kingdom that will never:
End.

Something Worth Pondering

Before Revelation shows us the dragon in Chapter 12, it gives us the seventh trumpet in Chapter: 11
Before we see the conflict behind the conflict, heaven tells us the:
Ending.
That order matters.
We are not asked to face the dragon wondering whether God will:
Win.
We face the dragon knowing the kingdom already belongs to God and His:
Messiah.
Perhaps that is how Christians are meant to face every frightening chapter of:
Life.
Not pretending the dragon is harmless.
Not pretending suffering is unreal.
Not pretending the battle does not:
Matter.
But refusing to forget what heaven has already:

Said.
The kingdom belongs to God.
The Lamb reigns.
The woe passes.
God remains.
Revelation gives us the ending so we can endure the:
Middle.
And sometimes that is exactly what faith:
Needs.

Ask Yourself This:

When the world around me looks chaotic, am I allowing what I see on earth to become more authoritative than what God has revealed from heaven?
Do I measure God's faithfulness by the circumstances immediately in front of me—or by the character of the God who remains when those circumstances have passed?
And when faith must endure the middle of the story, can I live faithfully because I already know who holds the ending?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:15

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

— Revelation 11:15, KJV

The seventh trumpet finally:
Sounds.
We have been waiting for this moment since Chapter: 8
Six angels have blown their trumpets.
Judgments have unfolded.
Warnings have sounded.
Human rebellion has persisted.
The little book has been eaten.
The temple has been measured.
The witnesses have testified.
Died.
Risen.
Ascended.
The earth has:
Shaken.
The second woe has:
Passed.
And now the seventh angel raises the trumpet and:
Blows.
What follows is not uncertainty.
It is:
Proclamation.
Heaven knows where the story is:
Going.

1. “Then”

That simple word moves us:
Forward.
The second woe has passed.
The third is coming very:
Soon.
Then—
the seventh angel:
Acts.
Revelation does not allow history to become:

Stuck.
The visions move.
The trumpets sound.
God's purposes advance toward their appointed:
End.

2. The Seventh Angel

This is the final angel in the trumpet:
Sequence.
The seventh.
Throughout Scripture, seven repeatedly carries the sense of completeness or:
Fulfillment.
We should not turn that into some mystical mathematical:
Formula.
But within Revelation, the structure is unmistakable.
Seven seals.
Seven trumpets.
Later, seven bowls.
The seventh trumpet brings this sequence to its:
Climax.

3. The Trumpet Finally Sounds

There has been a substantial interval between the sixth and seventh:
Trumpets.
That delay was not empty:
Space.
John received the little book.
He was commissioned to prophesy:
Again.
The temple was measured.
The Two Witnesses carried out their:
Testimony.
Everything mattered.
God was not delaying because He had lost control of the:
Schedule.
The apparent interruption was part of the:
Plan.

4. Waiting Does Not Mean Nothing Is Happening

That is worth remembering beyond:
Revelation.
We often interpret delay as:
Inactivity.
Nothing is happening.
God has forgotten.
The answer is not:

Coming.
But between the sixth and seventh trumpets, God was doing a great:
Deal.
Sometimes what we call a delay is simply the part of God's work we did not know needed to happen:
First.

5. The Seventh Trumpet Is the Third Woe

Verse 14 prepared us for:
This.
The third woe is coming very:
Soon.
So when the seventh trumpet sounds, we might brace ourselves for immediate:
Disaster.
Instead—
we hear:
Heaven.
That is important.
The third woe cannot be understood merely as another catastrophe.
The seventh trumpet announces the decisive reign of:
God.
And that reign is good news for God's people precisely because it is bad news for everything that opposes:
Him.

6. There Are Loud Voices in Heaven

John hears:
Voices.
Not one quiet:
Voice.
Loud:
Voices.
Heaven is not whispering about the outcome of:
History.
There is no uncertainty.
No nervous speculation.
No heavenly debate over whether God's kingdom will ultimately:
Prevail.
The announcement is:
Loud.
The outcome is:
Certain.

7. Heaven Is Not Anxious

That may be worth sitting with for a:

Moment.
Earth is filled with:
Anxiety.
Nations rage.
Empires rise.
Witnesses are killed.
Cities shake.
People wonder what comes:
Next.
But heaven is not wringing its:
Hands.
God is not wondering whether His plan will:
Work.
The throne has never been in:
Danger.

8. Heaven Sees Differently

From the street in Verse 8, the witnesses looked:
Defeated.
From heaven, they were:
Faithful.
From the perspective of the inhabitants of the earth, the beast appeared:
Victorious.
From heaven, its victory lasted three and a half:
Days.
From earth, kingdoms appear enormously:
Powerful.
From heaven, their future is already:
Settled.
Revelation teaches us to see earthly reality through heavenly:
Eyes.

9. “The Kingdoms of This World”

The proclamation concerns:
“The kingdoms of this world.”
Plural.
The world has many competing claims to authority, but the proclamation places them within one great:
Picture.
Empires.
Kings.
Governments.
Systems.
Cultures.
Powers.

Whatever their names, every human claim to ultimate sovereignty confronts the same:
Reality.
There is only one ultimate:
King.

10. Earthly Kingdoms Always Look More Permanent Than They Are

History teaches us this repeatedly.
Empires rise believing they will:
Last.
Monuments are built.
Armies march.
Borders expand.
Rulers speak as though their authority is:
Permanent.
Then another generation comes.
Another kingdom rises.
Another empire:
Falls.
Human power has an extraordinary ability to mistake temporary control for permanent:
Ownership.
Revelation corrects that illusion.

11. The World Does Not Ultimately Belong to Its Rulers

This is the deeper claim of the:
Verse.
The world is not ultimately owned by whoever controls the largest:
Army.
The greatest economy.
The strongest political system.
The most influential:
Culture.
Those powers are temporary:
Stewards—
and sometimes rebellious ones.
Creation belongs to its:
Creator.

12. “Are Become”

This is perhaps the most fascinating phrase in the:
Verse.
The proclamation speaks as though something has already:
Happened.

Yet we know the story continues.
The dragon is still coming.
The beasts are still coming.
Babylon is still:
Coming.
Revelation still has eleven chapters:
Remaining.
Yet heaven announces the kingdom as an accomplished:
Reality.

13. Heaven Speaks From the Certainty of God's Promise

This is not carelessness with:
Time.
It is theological:
Certainty.
What God has purposed is so certain that heaven can speak of its fulfillment as:
Done.
God's promise is not merely a prediction about what might:
Happen.
His purpose determines where history is:
Going.

14. We Live Before Some Things Heaven Already Calls Certain

That creates an interesting position for:
Faith.
We still live inside the:
Story.
We still encounter evil.
Suffering.
Uncertainty.
Death.
We still pray:
“Your kingdom come.”
Yet faith rests upon a victory God has already guaranteed in:
Christ.
We live between promise and complete:
Fulfillment.

15. “Our Lord”

The kingdom belongs to:
“Our Lord.”
That little pronoun matters:
“Our.”

This is not merely a theological statement about a distant:
Deity.
The One who reigns is the One to whom the worshipers:
Belong.
Their Lord.
Our:
Lord.
The sovereignty of God is not merely something to fear.
For those who belong to Him, it is something in which to:
Rest.

16. “And of His Messiah”

Then comes:
His Messiah.
The Christ.
The Anointed:
One.
The Lamb who was:
Slain.
The One whom earthly powers rejected.
The One who conquered not by becoming another beast—
but by remaining the:
Lamb.
The kingdom belongs to God and His:
Messiah.

17. The Crucified One Reigns

That is one of Christianity's great:
Reversals.
Rome crucified:
Jesus.
Crucifixion was intended to announce:
Powerlessness.
Shame.
Defeat.
The world looked at the cross and saw someone who had:
Lost.
Revelation looks at the Lamb and sees the One who:
Reigns.
The cross was not the defeat of God's kingdom.
It was central to its:
Victory.

18. God's Kingdom Does Not Become Another Beast

This matters enormously in:
Revelation.

The Lamb does not defeat the beast by becoming a better:
Beast.
He conquers as the:
Lamb.
God's kingdom is not simply worldly domination with different people sitting on the:
Throne.
Its character is revealed in:
Christ.
Holy.
Faithful.
Just.
Self-giving.
True.

19. “He Will Reign”

The announcement now looks toward enduring:
Rule.
He will:
Reign.
Not campaign.
Not struggle endlessly for control.
Not share ultimate sovereignty with competing:
Powers.
Reign.
The destination of history is not perpetual:
Conflict.
It is the uncontested reign of:
God.

20. “Forever and Ever”

And now we reach the phrase that distinguishes God's kingdom from every kingdom we have ever:
Known.
Forever and:
Ever.
Rome could not say:
That.
Babylon could not say:
That.
Egypt could not say:
That.
No empire can truthfully say:
That.
Every human kingdom has an expiration:

Date.
God's kingdom does:
Not.

21. The Woe Passes—The Kingdom Remains

Verse 14 told us:
The second woe has passed.
Verse 15 tells us:
The kingdom lasts forever.
There is the contrast.
Woe:
Passes.
Kingdom:
Remains.
Beasts:
Pass.
The Lamb:
Remains.
Babylon:
Falls.
God:
Remains.
Death itself will:
Pass.
God's reign:
Remains.

22. Endurance Depends Upon Knowing What Lasts

This is why Revelation can call the Church to:
Endure.
Endurance becomes possible when we learn the difference between what is temporary and what is:
Eternal.
If the beast were eternal—
despair would make:
Sense.
If Babylon were eternal—
compromise might seem:
Reasonable.
If death were eternal—
hope would be:
Foolish.
But none of them:
Are.
God is.

23. The Loudest Voice Is Not Always the Final Voice

Earth has many loud:
Voices.
Political power.
Military power.
Cultural power.
Economic power.
Fear.
Violence.
Propaganda.
Crowds.
They can become so loud that we mistake volume for:
Authority.
Then Revelation opens heaven.
And louder voices announce:
The kingdom belongs to God.
The loudest voice on earth is not necessarily the final voice in:
Heaven.

24. The Seventh Trumpet Gives Us the Ending Before the Middle Is Finished

This may be the great pastoral gift of Verse: 15
John has not finished showing us the:
Conflict.
But God has already shown us the:
Outcome.
That means Chapters 12 through 20 can be read differently.
We will meet the:
Dragon.
But we already know:
He loses.
We will meet the:
Beasts.
But we already know:
They lose.
We will see:
Babylon.
But we already know:
It falls.
The ending has been announced before the conflict has been fully:
Explained.

25. Revelation Gives Us the Ending So We Can Endure the Middle

And perhaps here is the heart of the:
Verse.
Revelation gives us the ending so we can endure the middle.
The first readers of Revelation did not need a book that merely satisfied their curiosity about the:
Future.
They needed courage for the:
Present.
They needed to know that Rome was not:
Ultimate.
Caesar was not:
Ultimate.
Suffering was not:
Ultimate.
Death was not:
Ultimate.
God:
Was.

26. We Need the Same Vision

Our circumstances are different.
The truth is:
Not.
We also live in the:
Middle.
We do not know what tomorrow will:
Bring.
We do not know which circumstances will:
Change.
We do not know which prayers will be answered in the way we:
Hope.
But we know where the story ultimately:
Ends.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
The Lamb:
Reigns.

27. Faith Does Not Require Knowing Every Detail

This is another reason we have resisted turning Revelation into a prophetic:
Puzzle.
We do not need to identify every modern event before we can:

Trust.
We do not need a chart explaining every symbol before we can:
Endure.
We do not need to know everything God:
Knows.
We need to know what God decided we needed to:
Know.
And Verse 15 tells us something we desperately need to:
Know.
God wins.

28. More Precisely—God Reigns

Even “God wins” can sound as though God were one competitor among:
Many.
Revelation gives us something deeper.
God:
Reigns.
He is not scrambling toward victory.
He is not desperately trying to rescue a plan that almost:
Failed.
The throne has been occupied all:
Along.
The seventh trumpet reveals what has always been ultimately:
True.
The kingdom belongs to:
Him.

29. The Church Does Not Create the Kingdom

This also protects us from another:
Mistake.
The Church does not build God's kingdom through its own:
Power.
We bear witness to the:
King.
We live according to His:
Kingdom.
We pray for His kingdom to:
Come.
But the kingdom is:
His.
Its final arrival does not depend upon our ability to engineer:
History.
That is God's:
Work.

30. Our Calling Is Faithfulness

And that brings us right back to the Two:
Witnesses.
Their job was not to conquer the:
World.
Their job was to:
Testify.
They finished their:
Testimony.
God handled the:
Vindication.
That remains the pattern.
We witness.
We worship.
We serve.
We endure.
God brings the:
Kingdom.

Pastoral Reflection

Sometimes the world looks very far from the kingdom of:
God.
We look around and see:
Division.
Violence.
Greed.
Injustice.
Fear.
Suffering.
And sometimes we look within our own lives and see circumstances that seem equally:
Unsettled.
Prayers unanswered.
Doors closed.
People hurting.
Questions without:
Answers.
From inside the middle of the story, everything can look:
Uncertain.
Then the seventh trumpet:
Sounds.
And heaven speaks from a perspective we cannot yet fully:
See.
The kingdom belongs to:

God.
The Messiah:
Reigns.
And His reign will never:
End.
That does not make today's suffering:
Imaginary.
It does not make today's questions:
Unimportant.
It gives them a:
Horizon.
The middle is not the:
Ending.
And perhaps that is what faith needs when it must:
Endure.
Not every answer.
Not every detail.
Not a map of every event still to:
Come.
Sometimes faith simply needs to hear heaven say:
The story is going somewhere.
And God is already there.

Something Worth Pondering

Before John shows us the dragon—
he tells us the dragon:
Loses.
Before he shows us the beasts—
he announces the kingdom that will outlast:
Them.
Before Babylon appears in all her apparent glory—
he tells us which kingdom lasts:
Forever.
That order is not:
Accidental.
God does not reveal the enemy first and leave His people wondering whether He can handle:
It.
He announces the kingdom.
Then He shows us the:
Conflict.
Revelation gives us the ending so we can endure the middle.
Perhaps that is one of the great gifts of this entire:
Book.

We may not know what tomorrow holds.
But we know who holds:
Tomorrow.
And more importantly—
we know who holds:
Forever.

Ask Yourself This:

When circumstances look chaotic, am I interpreting heaven through what I see on earth—or learning to interpret earth through what God has revealed from heaven?

Have I allowed something temporary to become so large in my vision that I have forgotten what lasts forever?

And when I do not know what happens next, can I remain faithful because I know where the story ultimately ends?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:16

“And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,”
— Revelation 11:16, KJV

The proclamation has been:
Made.
The seventh trumpet has:
Sounded.
The loud voices of heaven have announced the kingdom of God and His:
Messiah.
His reign will last forever and:
Ever.
And now John shows us the response of the twenty-four:
Elders.
They do not debate the:
Announcement.
They do not analyze it.
They do not congratulate themselves for having understood it:
Correctly.
They:
Fall.
Faces toward the:
Ground.
And they:
Worship.
Sometimes the deepest theology ends not with another explanation—
but with bowed:
Heads.

1. “Then”

Once again the vision:
Moves.
Heaven has:
Spoken.
Now heaven:
Responds.
Proclamation leads to:
Worship.
That sequence matters.
Truth about God is never intended merely to fill our:
Minds.

It should eventually reach our:
Hearts.
And sometimes our:
Knees.

2. The Twenty-Four Elders Appear Again

These elders are familiar to us by:
Now.
We first encountered them surrounding God's throne in Chapter: 4
They are seated on:
Thrones.
Clothed in white.
Wearing golden:
Crowns.
They appear repeatedly throughout Revelation as participants in heavenly:
Worship.
Whatever conclusions we may draw about their precise representative identity, John consistently shows us what they:
Do.
They worship:
God.

3. Function Before Speculation

Here again our interpretive guardrail is:
Useful.
There have been many suggestions concerning exactly whom the twenty-four elders:
Represent.
Israel.
The apostles.
The whole people of God.
A heavenly council.
Various combinations of these ideas.
There may be value in exploring those:
Possibilities.
But Verse 16 does not pause to settle the:
Question.
John's emphasis is upon their:
Response.
So ours should be:
Too.
They worship.

4. They Are Seated Before God

John reminds us that the elders are seated on their:
Thrones.

That is significant.
They possess positions of:
Honor.
Authority.
Dignity.
They are not insignificant figures within the heavenly:
Scene.
They have thrones of their:
Own.
But those thrones exist only in relationship to the throne before which they:
Sit.
Their authority is never:
Ultimate.
God's is.

5. There Are Thrones—and Then There Is the Throne

Revelation contains many:
Thrones.
Human rulers have thrones.
The beast exercises power.
The elders sit on:
Thrones.
But one throne dominates the entire:
Book.
God's.
Every other throne must eventually be understood in relation to:
His.
Authority can be delegated.
Honor can be given.
Responsibility can be entrusted.
But sovereignty belongs to:
God.

6. They Leave Their Thrones

And here is the picture that deserves to be:
Remembered.
The elders are sitting on their:
Thrones.
Then they:
Fall.
Their own thrones become less important than the One they:
Worship.
They do not cling to their seats of:
Honor.
They leave them for the:

Floor.
That may be one of Revelation's simplest pictures of genuine:
Worship.

7. Worship Puts Our Importance in Perspective

Human beings can become very impressed with our own:
Positions.
Titles.
Accomplishments.
Authority.
Recognition.
Even ministry can become a place where we quietly build little:
Thrones.
My church.
My ministry.
My book.
My accomplishment.
My:
Reputation.
Then we see the elders.
They have actual:
Thrones.
And when God is worshiped—
they get off:
Them.

8. There Is No Competition Around God's Throne

The elders do not appear threatened by God's:
Greatness.
They do not need recognition while He is being:
Praised.
They do not say:
What about us?
They understand something pride constantly:
Forgets.
God's glory does not diminish the creature.
It places the creature where the creature was always meant to:
Be.

9. They Fall on Their Faces

Their posture becomes even more:
Humble.
They do not merely:
Stand.
They do not merely:
Bow.

They fall on their:
Faces.
This is complete:
Submission.
Reverence.
Humility.
Recognition that they are in the presence of One infinitely greater than:
Themselves.

10. Worship Involves the Whole Person

There is something very physical about biblical:
Worship.
People stand.
Bow.
Kneel.
Raise hands.
Fall on their:
Faces.
The posture itself is not magical.
A person can kneel physically while remaining proud:
Inside.
But physical posture can express something profoundly:
True.
The elders' bodies say what their hearts:
Know.
God is:
God.
We are:
Not.

11. “Before God”

That may be the most important location in the:
Verse.
They are before:
God.
Everything changes depending upon whose presence we understand ourselves to be:
In.
Before other people, we may become concerned with:
Appearance.
Status.
Recognition.
Reputation.
Before God, those things become remarkably:
Small.

The elders know where they:
Are.
Before:
God.

12. Worship Begins With Seeing God Clearly

Much of our spiritual confusion begins when our vision of God becomes too:
Small.
Our problems become enormous.
Our fears become enormous.
Our opponents become enormous.
Our own importance becomes:
Enormous.
Then Revelation takes us into the throne:
Room.
And suddenly everything finds its proper:
Scale.
Worship restores:
Perspective.

13. They Worship God

That is the center of the:
Verse.
They:
Worship.
Not the witnesses.
Not the angels.
Not one another.
Not the throne itself.
God.
Revelation is relentless about the proper object of:
Worship.
That matters because the entire book is ultimately about:
Allegiance.
Whom will you: Worship?

14. Worship Is the Counterpart to Idolatry

Revelation repeatedly places two kinds of humanity before:
Us.
Those who worship God and the:
Lamb.
And those who give their allegiance elsewhere.
The central conflict is not merely political.
Economic.
Military.
Or cultural.

It is:
Worship.
Who deserves ultimate:
Allegiance?
Verse 16 gives the heavenly:
Answer.
God.

15. The Elders Respond to God's Reign With Worship

Verse 15 announced:
The kingdom.
Verse 16 gives the:
Response.
Worship.
That connection is important.
If God truly reigns, then worship is more than religious:
Activity.
It is the recognition of:
Reality.
Worship says:
You are God.
The kingdom is Yours.
The authority is Yours.
The glory is:
Yours.

16. Worship Is an Act of Allegiance

That means worship is not merely:
Singing.
Music may be part of:
Worship.
Prayer may be part of:
Worship.
Preaching may be part of:
Worship.
But worship reaches deeper.
It is the orientation of the life toward the One we recognize as:
Lord.
The elders' posture says:
We belong to:
You.

17. True Worship Makes Us Smaller Without Making Us Worthless

There is an important distinction:

Here.
Humility does not mean believing we have no:
Value.
The elders are honored.
They have thrones.
They have crowns.
They matter.
Yet they fall before:
God.
Their worth does not require God's greatness to become:
Smaller.
And God's greatness does not require their worth to:
Disappear.
True humility knows both:
We matter to God.
And God is infinitely greater than:
We are.

18. The Throne Does Not Belong to Us

Perhaps this is one of the hardest lessons for human beings to:
Learn.
We like control.
We like deciding outcomes.
We like arranging circumstances.
We like knowing what happens:
Next.
In subtle ways, we keep trying to climb onto the:
Throne.
Then Revelation shows us elders getting off their:
Thrones.
Perhaps worship begins whenever we stop trying to occupy a seat that never belonged to us in the first:
Place.

19. Some Burdens Come From Trying to Sit in God's Seat

There are things we are responsible:
For.
Our choices.
Our words.
Our actions.
Our faithfulness.
But there are things we cannot:
Control.
Other people.

Tomorrow.
Every outcome.
The future.
Final:
Vindication.
Sometimes anxiety grows because we are trying to carry responsibilities that belong only to:
God.
Worship hands them:
Back.

20. The Elders Do Not Control the Kingdom

Notice what they do not:
Do.
They do not make the kingdom:
Come.
They do not establish God's:
Reign.
They do not defeat God's:
Enemies.
They recognize what God has:
Done.
And they:
Worship.
This is wonderfully freeing.
God does not ask His people to be:
God.
He asks us to be:
Faithful.

21. The Witnesses Showed Us Faithfulness—The Elders Show Us Worship

Chapter 11 now gives us two beautiful pictures:
Together.
On earth:
Witness.
In heaven:
Worship.
The witnesses faithfully carry out their:
Calling.
The elders faithfully give God:
Glory.
Perhaps the Church always needs:
Both.
Witness without worship can become:

Activism.
Worship without witness can become:
Isolation.
Faithfulness requires both.

22. Worship Keeps Witness From Becoming About Us

This is especially important after the story of the Two:
Witnesses.
Their ministry was extraordinary.
Their authority was extraordinary.
Their vindication was:
Extraordinary.
But when the seventh trumpet sounds, attention does not remain on:
Them.
It moves to:
God.
That is exactly where faithful ministry should eventually:
Lead.
Not:
Look at me.
But:
Look at Him.

23. Every Crown Eventually Bows

The elders have:
Crowns.
They have:
Thrones.
Yet their posture is:
Prostrate.
Revelation continually reminds us that every legitimate honor finds its proper meaning when it is surrendered before:
God.
Whatever crown we carry—
achievement.
Position.
Knowledge.
Ministry.
Influence.
Reputation—
it belongs before the:
Throne.

24. The Greatest People in Heaven Are Still Worshipers

That is a humbling:
Thought.

Whatever honor the elders possess, their defining activity is still:
Worship.
They have not graduated beyond:
It.
They have not become so spiritually important that worship is beneath:
Them.
The closer Revelation brings us to heaven, the more worship we:
Find.

25. Eternity Does Not Make God Less Wonderful

Sometimes we imagine that familiarity reduces:
Wonder.
But the heavenly beings who dwell around God's throne continue to:
Worship.
They have seen more than:
We have.
Know more than:
We know.
Experienced the glory of God in ways we cannot yet:
Imagine.
And still they fall on their:
Faces.
Apparently eternity does not exhaust the wonder of:
God.

26. The Proper Response to the Seventh Trumpet Is Not a Chart

This may be worth saying in a commentary on:
Revelation.
The seventh trumpet has inspired enormous amounts of prophetic:
Calculation.
Timelines.
Systems.
Charts.
Debates.
Some of those discussions may have legitimate:
Value.
But look at what the elders:
Do.
They do not reach for a:
Chart.
They fall on their:
Faces.
Perhaps Revelation was always intended to produce worship before it produced:

Speculation.

27. Understanding Revelation Should Lead Us Toward Worship

If our study of Revelation leaves us:
Proud—
something has gone:
Wrong.
If it leaves us convinced that we alone have decoded every:
Mystery—
something has gone:
Wrong.
If it leaves us obsessed with identifying enemies while neglecting:
Christ—
something has gone:
Wrong.
The elders show us the proper destination of:
Understanding.
Worship.

28. Sometimes the Most Faithful Response Is Simply to Bow

There are mysteries we cannot:
Solve.
Events we cannot:
Control.
Questions we cannot:
Answer.
But worship does not require complete:
Understanding.
Sometimes worship says:
I do not know everything.
But I know:
You.
I do not understand every part of the story.
But I trust the One who:
Writes it.
And that is:
Enough.

Pastoral Reflection

We spend much of life trying to remain:
Upright.
Strong.
Competent.

In control.
We want to handle our:
Problems.
Fix our:
Circumstances.
Protect our:
Reputation.
Manage our:
Future.
And there is nothing wrong with responsible:
Action.
But eventually every believer encounters things that cannot be managed from our little:
Thrones.
Things we cannot:
Fix.
People we cannot:
Change.
Questions we cannot:
Answer.
Outcomes we cannot:
Control.
Perhaps those moments are invitations to do what the elders:
Do.
Get off the:
Throne.
Fall before:
God.
And worship.
Not because the problem has disappeared.
Not because every question has been:
Answered.
But because worship reminds us who actually occupies the throne that matters:
Most.
There is freedom in being able to say:
God is God.
And I do not have to be.

Something Worth Pondering

The twenty-four elders have thrones.
And when God's reign is proclaimed—
they leave them for the:
Floor.

Perhaps that is one of the clearest pictures of worship Revelation has given:
Us.
We spend so much of life trying to build:
Thrones.
A throne of control.
A throne of reputation.
A throne of certainty.
A throne of being:
Right.
A throne of self-sufficiency.
Then we come before:
God.
And suddenly the floor is the better:
Place.
Because worship begins when we remember:
There are thrones.
And then there is the Throne.

Ask Yourself This:

Is there an area of my life where I am trying to occupy a throne that belongs only to God?
Has my knowledge of Scripture made me more worshipful and humble—or merely more certain that I am right?
And when I cannot control what happens next, can I say with genuine peace:
God is God. And I do not have to be?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:17

“Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.”
— Revelation 11:17, KJV

The elders have left their:
Thrones.
They have fallen on their:
Faces.
They are worshiping:
God.
And now we hear their:
Words.
They begin not with a request.
Not with an explanation.
Not with a complaint.
But with:
Thanksgiving.
They give thanks to the Lord God:
Almighty.
The One who is.
The One who:
Was.
Because He has taken His great power and begun to:
Reign.
Heaven has announced the kingdom.
The elders have bowed.
And now worship gives voice to what heaven:
Knows.
God reigns.

1. “We Give Thee Thanks”

The first words are words of:
Gratitude.
“We give thee thanks.”
That is significant.
The elders are responding to the reign of God not merely with:
Submission—
but with:
Thanksgiving.
They are glad that God:

Reigns.
His rule is not something heaven reluctantly:
Endures.
It is something heaven:
Celebrates.

2. God's Reign Is Good News

That tells us something about the character of:
God.
If God were cruel—
His reign would be terrifying.
If God were unjust—
His sovereignty would be horrifying.
If God were arbitrary—
His absolute power would be dangerous.
But the God Revelation has shown us is:
Holy.
Faithful.
Just.
Merciful.
True.
The reign of such a God is reason for:
Thanksgiving.

3. Power Is Only Good When the One Holding It Is Good

Human history teaches us to be cautious around:
Power.
Power can corrupt.
Power can oppress.
Power can exploit.
Power can destroy.
So when Revelation speaks about God's “great power,” the character of the One possessing that power:
Matters.
God's power cannot be separated from God's:
Character.
The Almighty is also the:
Holy One.
The Judge is also the God who:
Loves.
The One who reigns is worthy to:
Reign.

4. “Lord God”

The elders address Him as:
Lord God.

Both words speak of:
Authority.
He is not merely one spiritual power among:
Many.
He is:
Lord.
He is:
God.
Everything else in Revelation must be understood beneath that:
Reality.
Dragons may rage.
Beasts may rise.
Kings may rule.
But none of them are:
Lord God.

5. “Almighty”

Then comes a title Revelation uses repeatedly:
Almighty.
The Greek idea behind the title carries the sense of the One who rules over:
All.
No power lies outside His ultimate:
Authority.
No beast is beyond His:
Reach.
No empire exists independently of His:
Sovereignty.
No future can surprise:
Him.
He is the Lord God:
Almighty.

6. Almighty Does Not Mean Everything That Happens Is Good

We need to be careful:
Here.
Revelation contains terrible:
Things.
Persecution.
Death.
War.
Rebellion.
Suffering.
Calling God Almighty does not mean calling all those things:
Good.

Evil remains:
Evil.
The beast remains:
Evil.
Human rebellion remains:
Rebellion.
God's sovereignty means evil never becomes ultimate:
Sovereignty.

7. Evil Acts—But Evil Does Not Reign Forever

That distinction is essential in:
Revelation.
The beast can:
Act.
The dragon can:
Rage.
Babylon can:
Seduce.
The nations can:
Resist.
But none of them can write the final:
Chapter.
Their activity is real.
Their suffering is real.
Their responsibility is real.
Their reign is:
Temporary.
God's is not.

8. “Which Art”

The elders speak of the God:
“which art”—
the One who:
Is.
God is not merely a figure from Israel's:
Past.
He is present:
Now.
The God who spoke to Moses is:
Present.
The God who called the prophets is:
Present.
The God who raised Jesus is:
Present.
The God who sustained the witnesses is:

Present.
He:
Is.

9. “And Wast”

He is also the One who:
Was.
The God of the present is the God of the:
Past.
He has not become someone:
Else.
The God who was faithful before remains faithful:
Now.
That gives memory an important place in:
Faith.
When we cannot understand what God is doing now, we remember who He has shown Himself to be:
Before.

10. Remembering Sustains Endurance

Israel repeatedly looked backward in order to move:
Forward.
Remember the Exodus.
Remember the covenant.
Remember God's:
Faithfulness.
The Church does the:
Same.
Remember the cross.
Remember the empty:
Tomb.
Remember what God has:
Done.
Memory becomes fuel for:
Endurance.
The God who was faithful then is the God who:
Is.

11. “And Art to Come”

The KJV retains the threefold description of:
God.
He is.
He was.
And He is to:
Come.
The One who has always been faithful remains the One who will fulfill His:

Promises.
His action in the present does not cancel His promised:
Coming.
The elders worship the God whose faithfulness embraces past, present, and:
Future.
That gives the Church a reason for:
Hope.
And a reason to:
Endure.

12. Let the Words Guide the Interpretation

We should not build an argument upon a missing phrase when the KJV includes:
It.
The seventh trumpet has sounded.
God's reign is being:
Proclaimed.
The words "and art to come" remain within the elders' thanksgiving.
God's promised future and His decisive action belong:
Together.
The passage calls us to worship the Lord who keeps His:
Word.
We need not force every detail into a timetable.
We can receive what the vision clearly:
Announces.
God has taken His great power.
He has:
Reigned.
And His faithfulness reaches beyond the Church's present:
Trouble.

13. The Coming One Has Taken His Great Power

The movement of the vision is:
Beautiful.
The elders still confess:
He is to come.
And they also celebrate:
He has taken His great power.
The vision has moved toward the fulfillment of what was:
Promised.
Expectation is becoming:
Reality.
The kingdom announced in Verse 15 is now celebrated in Verse: 17

14. God Has Not Suddenly Acquired Power

This phrase could be:

Misunderstood.
“He has taken His great power.”
That does not mean God previously lacked:
Power.
God did not suddenly discover sovereignty at the seventh:
Trumpet.
The elders already call Him:
Almighty.
The point is not that God finally becomes powerful.
The point is that His power is now being decisively exercised in:
Reign.

15. There Is a Difference Between Possessing Power and Manifesting It

A king may possess authority before exercising that authority in a particular:
Situation.
Likewise, Revelation speaks of the moment when God's sovereign rule becomes openly and decisively:
Manifest.
What has always been true in heaven becomes unmistakable throughout:
Creation.
God reigns.

16. “Thy Great Power”

Notice whose power it:
Is.
“Your” great power.
God does not borrow authority from:
Anyone.
He does not receive sovereignty through an:
Election.
He does not require permission from the:
Nations.
He does not negotiate with the:
Beast.
His authority belongs inherently to:
Him.
He is:
God.

17. The Beast's Power Is Always Derivative

This contrast will become especially important in the chapters:
Ahead.
The dragon gives authority.
The beast receives authority.

Earthly rulers exercise limited:
Authority.
But God does not receive His sovereignty from another:
Source.
Every created power is:
Derivative.
God's power is:
Ultimate.

18. “And Hast Reigned”

Here is the great reason for:
Thanksgiving.
The KJV says that God “hast reigned.” His sovereign rule is being decisively:
Manifested.
Again, this does not mean He was previously absent from the:
Throne.
Revelation began by showing Him:
There.
Rather, the language announces the decisive manifestation of His kingdom against every rival:
Claim.
The reign that heaven has always recognized is moving toward universal:
Recognition.

19. God's Reign Ends the Illusion of Rival Sovereignty

The world contains many claims to:
Power.
The beast will claim authority.
Babylon will appear glorious.
Kings will exercise dominion.
The dragon will rage.
But the seventh trumpet announces that none of those powers is truly a rival equal to:
God.
They are rebels.
Not:
Competitors.
There is an enormous difference.

20. God Does Not Win a Close Contest

Revelation is not the story of two equally matched forces battling until God barely:
Wins.
Good and evil are not equal:
Opposites.

The dragon is a:
Creature.
The beast is a:
Creature.
God is the:
Creator.
The outcome is not a cosmic coin:
Toss.
The throne was never actually:
Vacant.

21. Heaven Gives Thanks Before Earth Fully Sees It

This is another remarkable part of the:
Scene.
Earth has not yet reached the final:
Consummation.
Much remains to unfold in John's:
Vision.
Yet heaven already gives:
Thanks.
Faith can sometimes thank God before circumstances have completely caught up with His:
Promise.
Not because faith denies reality.
Because faith trusts the One who determines ultimate:
Reality.

22. Thanksgiving Can Be an Act of Faith

There are times when thanksgiving follows an obvious:
Blessing.
The prayer is answered.
The door opens.
The healing comes.
The problem is:
Resolved.
Thanksgiving comes:
Naturally.
But there are other times when thanksgiving becomes an act of:
Trust.
God, I do not yet understand.
But I know who You:
Are.

23. Worship Remembers Who God Is Before Asking What God Will Do

The elders do not begin with:
Give us.
Fix this.
Change that.
They begin:
We give You thanks.
Their worship is centered first upon:
God.
Lord.
God.
Almighty.
Who is.
Who was.
Sometimes prayer needs to begin not with the size of our problem—
but with the character of our:
God.

24. The One Who Was Faithful Is the One Who Reigns

There is continuity:
Here.
The God who acted in the past is the God who reigns in the:
Present.
He has not abandoned His:
Character.
Power has not changed:
Him.
Authority has not corrupted:
Him.
The One who reigns is the same One who has always been:
Faithful.
That is why heaven can give:
Thanks.

25. This Is Not Merely Power—It Is Trustworthy Power

That may be the pastoral heart of the:
Verse.
We do not simply believe that God is:
Powerful.
We believe His power is:
Trustworthy.
The hands holding history are the same hands revealed in:
Christ.

The sovereign God is not a stranger to:
Us.
We have seen His character in the:
Lamb.

26. The Lamb Keeps Us From Misunderstanding Almighty

Whenever the word “Almighty” begins to sound like raw, impersonal:
Force—
look at the:
Lamb.
Revelation refuses to separate God's sovereignty from the Lamb who was:
Slain.
Divine power is not merely the ability to:
Crush.
It is the power to redeem.
To save.
To judge rightly.
To make all things:
New.

27. Thanksgiving Is Possible Because God Has Not Changed

Our circumstances:
Change.
Our bodies:
Change.
Relationships change.
Nations change.
Churches change.
Cultures:
Change.
The world around us can become almost unrecognizable over the course of a:
Lifetime.
But the elders worship the One who:
Is.
And who:
Was.
The center:
Holds.

28. Faith Needs an Unchanging Center

If everything changed at once, life would become:
Unbearable.
Faith requires somewhere to:

Stand.
Revelation gives us that place.
Not a political system.
Not an institution.
Not our circumstances.
Not ourselves.
God.
The One who is.
The One who was.
The Almighty.

29. The Proper Response to God's Reign Is Gratitude

Verse 16 gave us:
Posture.
Verse 17 gives us:
Words.
Faces down.
Thanks:
Up.
That is worship.
Humility before God.
Gratitude toward:
God.
Recognition that the kingdom is:
His.

30. The Elders Know Something We Need to Remember

The world may appear unstable.
The future may appear uncertain.
The conflict may appear enormous.
But the elders know:
Who is on the throne.
Who has the power.
Who reigns.
And because they know—
they can give:
Thanks.
Perhaps peace begins when we remember the same:
Thing.

Pastoral Reflection

There are moments when it is easy to give:
Thanks.
The answer comes.
The problem resolves.
The test result is:

Good.
The child comes:
Home.
The door opens.
The burden:
Lifts.
And thanksgiving rises almost without:
Effort.
But there are other moments when we are still standing somewhere in the:
Middle.
The prayer is still unanswered.
The future is still:
Unclear.
The burden remains.
And thanksgiving becomes more:
Difficult.
Verse 17 reminds us that Christian thanksgiving is not based solely upon favorable:
Circumstances.
It is rooted in the character of:
God.
He is.
He was.
He is Almighty.
He reigns.
Our circumstances may not yet look like the kingdom has:
Come.
But heaven knows where history is:
Going.
And sometimes faith says:
Lord, I cannot yet thank You for everything I see.
But I can thank You for who You are.
That may be enough for:
Today.

Something Worth Pondering

Earlier Revelation spoke of God as the One who:
Is.
Was.
And is to:
Come.
Here the elders speak of the One who:
Is.
And was.

Then they give the reason for their:
Thanksgiving.
He has taken His great power and begun to:
Reign.
Something anticipated is moving toward:
Fulfillment.
The God who promised to come has not forgotten His:
Promise.
And perhaps that is something worth remembering whenever God's timing feels:
Slow.
Delay does not mean:
Forgetfulness.
Silence does not mean:
Absence.
The One who was faithful is still the One who:
Is.
And the One who is still:
Reigns.

Ask Yourself This:

Is my thanksgiving dependent entirely upon circumstances going the way I hoped?
When I cannot understand what God is doing, can I still thank Him for who He has shown Himself to be?
And when everything around me seems to be changing, am I building my life upon the One who is, who was, and whose reign cannot be shaken?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:18

> **“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”**
> — Revelation 11:18, KJV

The elders are still:
Worshiping.
They have thanked the Lord God Almighty because He has taken His great power and begun to:
Reign.
Now their worship turns toward what that reign:
Means.
And suddenly the horizon becomes:
Enormous.
Nations:
Rage.
God's wrath:
Comes.
The dead are:
Judged.
God's servants are:
Rewarded.
Those who fear His name are:
Remembered.
The small and the great stand together before:
God.
And those who destroy the earth face the judgment of the One to whom the earth:
Belongs.
This is not a quiet:
Verse.
It gathers judgment, justice, reward, accountability, creation, and the destiny of humanity into a few breathtaking:
Lines.

1. “The Nations Were Angry”

The verse begins with human:
Rage.
The nations:
Raged.

That language carries a familiar biblical:
Echo.
Psalm 2 begins with the nations raging and the peoples plotting against the Lord and His:
Anointed.
That same pattern now appears in:
Revelation.
Human rebellion gathers itself against the reign of:
God.

2. Rage Is the Response of Rebellion to God's Rule

Why do the nations:
Rage?
Because God's reign confronts every claim to ultimate:
Autonomy.
The kingdom announced in Verse 15 means that no human power can truthfully say:
I am ultimate.
No empire.
No ruler.
No system.
No:
Nation.
God's kingdom exposes every earthly throne as:
Temporary.
Rebellion does not welcome that:
News.
It rages.

3. Human Rage Does Not Threaten God's Throne

This is an important:
Contrast.
The nations:
Rage.
God:
Reigns.
Those two realities are not equal in:
Power.
The nations do not rage because God's throne is:
Weak.
They rage because His authority contradicts their claim to:
Independence.
Their rage is real.
But it is not:
Ultimate.

4. Noise Is Not Sovereignty

Rage can be:
Loud.
Violence can be:
Loud.
Opposition can be:
Loud.
Fear can be:
Loud.
Sometimes the loudest thing in our field of vision begins to look like the most powerful:
Thing.
Revelation teaches otherwise.
The nations may rage.
The throne does not:
Move.

5. “And Thy Wrath Is Come”

Human rage is followed by divine:
Wrath.
But we must not treat those as moral:
Equivalents.
The rage of rebellious humanity and the wrath of holy God are not simply two angry sides shouting at one:
Another.
God's wrath is not divine:
Irritability.
It is His holy opposition to:
Evil.

6. We Must Understand Wrath Through God's Character

Human anger is often:
Selfish.
Impulsive.
Disproportionate.
Vindictive.
Misguided.
God's judgment is not:
That.
The God who judges is the same God Revelation has shown us as:
Holy.
True.
Faithful.

Patient.
Worthy.
His wrath is the response of perfect holiness to that which destroys what He:
Loves.

7. A God Who Never Opposed Evil Would Not Be Good

This is uncomfortable but:
Important.
We sometimes imagine that love and judgment must be:
Opposites.
But what would love mean if God were eternally indifferent to:
Cruelty?
Oppression?
Murder?
Exploitation?
Abuse?
Deception?
A God who looked upon evil forever and simply said:
It does not matter—
would not be more:
Loving.
He would be less:
Just.

8. Judgment Means Evil Matters

That is one of the reasons judgment can actually be good:
News.
It means suffering matters.
Victims matter.
Truth matters.
Justice matters.
What people do to one another:
Matters.
God does not dismiss evil with a cosmic:
Shrug.
He judges.

9. “The Time”

There is a time for:
Judgment.
That fits everything Chapter 11 has already taught:
Us.
The witnesses had an appointed time to:
Testify.
Their enemies had a limited time to:
Gloat.

The nations had a time to:
Rage.
Now comes the time for:
Judgment.
History does not drift forever without:
Resolution.

10. God Has Not Forgotten the Calendar

Earlier we said:
The clock belongs to God.
That remains true:
Here.
Human beings often become impatient with divine:
Timing.
Why has God not acted?
Why does evil continue?
Why has justice not:
Come?
Revelation does not answer every question about God's:
Timing.
But it insists that there is a:
Time.
Delay is not the same as:
Neglect.

11. “For Judging the Dead”

The horizon now expands beyond the immediate conflict of the:
Witnesses.
Beyond the city.
Beyond the earthquake.
Beyond the nations.
The:
Dead.
John is pointing us toward final:
Accountability.
Death does not remove anyone from the authority of:
God.

12. Death Is Not an Escape From Justice

Human courts have:
Limits.
A criminal may die before facing:
Trial.
A victim may die without seeing:
Justice.
A ruler may commit terrible acts and die surrounded by:

Luxury.
History contains countless wrongs that were never fully corrected within:
History.
Revelation says the grave does not place those matters beyond:
God.

13. God Sees What History Misses

Some injustices are:
Remembered.
Others disappear from human:
Memory.
Some victims receive names in history:
Books.
Others are known only to:
God.
Some crimes are exposed.
Others remain hidden.
But nothing is hidden from the:
Judge.
That is sobering for the wrongdoer.
And comforting for the:
Forgotten.

14. Judgment Is Part of the Hope of Revelation

We often treat judgment only as something to:
Fear.
And Scripture certainly treats it with great:
Seriousness.
But for those who have suffered injustice, judgment also means:
Hope.
The oppressor does not receive the final:
Word.
The beast does not write the final:
Verdict.
God does.

15. Then Comes Reward

The verse does not speak only of:
Judgment.
It also speaks of:
Reward.
God remembers His:
Servants.
This is another great reversal of Chapter: 11
The world looked at the witnesses and saw disposable:
Bodies.

God saw faithful:
Servants.
What the world disregards, heaven:
Remembers.

16. “Your Servants”

That phrase is beautiful in its:
Simplicity.
Your:
Servants.
They belong to:
God.
Their worth is not determined by earthly:
Recognition.
Their service may be public.
Or nearly:
Invisible.
But God knows those who serve:
Him.

17. The Prophets Are Remembered

The verse specifically includes the:
Prophets.
That connects naturally with what we have just witnessed in Chapter: 11
The Two Witnesses prophesied.
They wore:
Sackcloth.
They were opposed.
Killed.
Mocked.
Vindicated.
Their story illustrates a larger:
Truth.
God does not forget those who faithfully speak His:
Word.

18. Faithfulness May Be Forgotten on Earth and Remembered in Heaven

Human memory is:
Short.
Names disappear.
Churches close.
Ministries end.
Books go out of:
Print.

Gravestones weather.
Generations:
Pass.
But heaven's memory is not dependent upon human:
Recognition.
God remembers faithfulness.

19. The Saints Are Remembered

The verse also includes God's:
Saints.
Those who belong to:
Him.
Again Revelation draws attention away from worldly measures of:
Importance.
The kingdom is filled with people whose names may never appear in any human history:
Book.
But their names are known to:
God.

20. Those Who Fear God's Name

The description broadens:
Further.
Those who fear His:
Name.
Biblical fear of God is not merely:
Terror.
It is reverence.
Awe.
Recognition.
Allegiance.
Taking God seriously as:
God.
These are people whose lives are oriented toward:
Him.

21. “Small and Great”

And now comes one of the most pastoral phrases in the:
Verse.
Small and:
Great.
Human society loves:
Categories.
Important.
Unimportant.
Famous.

Unknown.
Powerful.
Ordinary.
Successful.
Forgotten.
God sees:
All.

22. Heaven Does Not Use Our Status System

The small are not overlooked because the great are:
Present.
The great do not receive special access because they were important on:
Earth.
Before God, earthly status loses its power to determine human:
Worth.
Small and great stand beneath the same:
Lord.

23. God Knows the Person Nobody Else Notices

There is comfort:
Here.
The faithful Sunday school teacher whose name never travels beyond one:
Church.
The caregiver serving quietly for:
Years.
The person who prays without anyone knowing.
The believer who remains faithful in an ordinary life.
The pastor whose congregation never becomes:
Large.
The person who serves without:
Applause.
Small and great.
God:
Knows.

24. The Kingdom Redefines Greatness

Human beings measure greatness by:
Visibility.
Influence.
Money.
Position.
Numbers.
Recognition.
God measures differently.
Revelation repeatedly places:
Faithfulness—

at the center.
The question is not:
How impressive were you?
But:
Were you faithful?

25. Then the Verse Turns Again

Judgment.
Reward.
And then another striking:
Phrase.
God will deal with those who destroy the:
Earth.
That deserves careful:
Attention.
Because it tells us something about how God regards His:
Creation.

26. The Earth Belongs to God

Humanity did not create the:
Earth.
We received:
It.
Creation belongs ultimately to its:
Creator.
That means what humanity does with creation is not a matter of absolute human:
Ownership.
We are creatures living within something God:
Made.
And what God makes:
Matters.

27. Human Rebellion Damages More Than Human Souls

Sin does not remain neatly contained within individual:
Hearts.
It spreads.
It harms:
People.
Communities.
Nations.
Relationships.
And creation:
Itself.
Human rebellion leaves destruction in its:
Wake.

Revelation takes that destruction:
Seriously.

28. “Those Who Destroy” Face the Creator

There is a profound reversal:
Here.
Those who destroy appear powerful while they are doing the:
Destroying.
They consume.
Exploit.
Ravage.
Kill.
Ruin.
But eventually the destroyers themselves stand before the One who:
Creates.
Destruction does not receive the final:
Word.
The Creator does.

29. We Should Not Make the Phrase Smaller Than It Is

There is a temptation to force this phrase into only one modern:
Issue.
We should resist:
That.
John's language is broad.
The destructive powers portrayed throughout Revelation damage human beings, societies, and the created:
Order.
We should allow the phrase to carry its full biblical:
Weight.
God opposes what destroys His:
Creation.

30. Neither Should We Ignore Its Creation Dimension

The opposite mistake would be to spiritualize the phrase until the word “earth” means almost:
Nothing.
God made creation.
God called creation:
Good.
Human beings were entrusted with responsibility within:
It.
And Revelation will ultimately move not toward God's abandonment of creation—
but toward its:
Renewal.

Creation matters to:
God.

31. Salvation Is Larger Than Escape

Sometimes Christian hope has been reduced to:
Leaving.
Leaving earth.
Leaving creation.
Escaping somewhere:
Else.
But Revelation's final vision will give us:
Renewal.
A new heaven.
A new earth.
The holy city.
God dwelling with:
Humanity.
God does not surrender creation to the:
Destroyers.
He redeems.

32. The Creator Has the Final Word Over Destruction

This may be one of the most hopeful truths buried within this severe:
Verse.
Destroyers do not:
Win.
They may leave terrible scars.
They may cause real suffering.
They may appear unstoppable for a:
Time.
But creation belongs to:
God.
And the Creator is not finished with what He:
Made.

33. Judgment and Reward Appear Together

Notice the balance of the:
Verse.
Wrath.
Judgment.
Reward.
Servants.
Saints.
Small and great.
Destroyers judged.
Revelation refuses to reduce God's final action to only one:

Dimension.
Justice includes both:
Setting wrongs right—
and remembering what was:
Faithful.

34. God Does Not Merely Punish Evil—He Honors Faithfulness

That distinction matters:
Pastorally.
Christian hope is not simply:
Someday the bad people will get what they deserve.
That would be a terribly impoverished:
Hope.
Our hope is:
God will set things right.
Faithfulness will be remembered.
Suffering will not be meaningless.
Creation will not be abandoned.
God will reign.

35. The Witnesses Were Not Wasting Their Time

Think again about the Two:
Witnesses.
They testified.
The world hated:
Them.
They died.
Their bodies were displayed.
People celebrated.
From one perspective their ministry looked like a complete:
Failure.
Verse 18 says:
No.
God remembers His:
Servants.
Faithfulness is never wasted when it is offered to: God.

36. Reward Is Grace Remembering Faithfulness

We should not turn reward into a heavenly wage:
System.
As though we could place God in our:
Debt.
Everything we have is already received through:
Grace.

Yet Scripture is comfortable speaking about God rewarding:
Faithfulness.
Grace does not make faithfulness:
Meaningless.
Grace makes faithfulness:
Possible.
And God, in His generosity, remembers what His grace produced in His:
People.

37. The Unknown Servant Is Not Unknown

Perhaps someone needs to hear:
That.
You may never have a platform.
Never write a book.
Never preach to thousands.
Never have your name remembered beyond a few:
Generations.
But if you belong to Christ and faithfully serve Him—
you are not:
Unknown.
He knows.

38. The World Measures Visibility—God Measures Faithfulness

That is one of Revelation's repeated:
Corrections.
The beast looks:
Impressive.
Babylon looks:
Impressive.
Earthly kingdoms look:
Impressive.
The witnesses look:
Weak.
The saints look:
Vulnerable.
But heaven's evaluation is entirely:
Different.
Appearances are not the final:
Verdict.
God's judgment is.

39. This Is Why Judgment Belongs to God

If we were the final judges, our judgment would be:
Incomplete.

We do not know every:
Heart.
Every motive.
Every circumstance.
Every hidden act.
Every secret wound.
Every quiet act of:
Faithfulness.
God does.
That is why final judgment belongs safely only in:
His hands.

40. We Can Release the Need to Settle Every Score

That truth can free:
Us.
We do not have to carry every grievance until it crushes:
Us.
We do not have to guarantee that every person who wronged us receives exactly what we think they:
Deserve.
Justice matters.
Accountability matters.
But final judgment belongs to:
God.
We can place what we cannot resolve into His:
Hands.

41. The Nations Rage—But Rage Is Not the Ending

The verse began with:
Rage.
It ends with:
Accountability.
That is the movement.
Human rebellion does not simply continue:
Forever.
There comes a moment when the Creator says:
Enough.
The raging nations do not write the:
Ending.
God does.

42. Revelation Gives the Suffering Church a Moral Universe

This may be one of the deepest purposes of this:
Verse.

The world can sometimes feel morally:
Chaotic.
Good people suffer.
Evil people prosper.
Faithfulness appears unrewarded.
Cruelty sometimes seems:
Successful.
Verse 18 says:
Do not mistake delay for indifference.
The universe is not morally:
Empty.
There is a:
Judge.
And He sees.

43. The Judge Is Also the Savior

And here we return to something we have said:
Before.
The Judge who sees the Church most clearly is also the Savior who loves the Church most deeply.
His judgment tells the truth.
His grace does not deny that:
Truth.
The Lamb who saves is not indifferent to:
Evil.
And the Judge who confronts evil is the Lamb who was:
Slain.

44. Judgment Is Not the Opposite of Hope

For the faithful, God's judgment means that the things which wound creation will not last:
Forever.
Violence will not last.
Oppression will not last.
Death will not last.
The beast will not last.
Babylon will not last.
Destruction will not:
Last.
God will.

45. This Is Why the Elders Give Thanks

Now we understand the context:
Better.
They are not celebrating human:
Suffering.

They are celebrating the arrival of divine:
Justice.
The kingdom comes.
Evil is judged.
Faithfulness is remembered.
Servants are rewarded.
Creation is defended.
God reigns.
That is why heaven says:
Thanks.

Pastoral Reflection

There are times when the world does not look:
Fair.
People who try to do what is right suffer.
People who cause harm sometimes appear to:
Prosper.
Quiet faithfulness goes:
Unnoticed.
Sacrifice receives no:
Applause.
And some wrongs are never corrected within a human:
Lifetime.
That can weigh heavily upon the:
Heart.
Verse 18 does not tell us that those things do not:
Matter.
It tells us precisely the:
Opposite.
They matter so much that God Himself will finally address:
Them.
The dead will be judged.
The servants will be remembered.
The saints will not be:
Forgotten.
The small will not disappear beside the:
Great.
And those who destroy what God loves will discover that destruction does not have the final:
Word.
Perhaps faith does not always require seeing justice immediately.
Sometimes faith means trusting that nothing requiring God's attention has escaped His:
Attention.

No hidden wound.
No forgotten servant.
No quiet act of faithfulness.
No injustice.
No destroyer.
Nothing.
God:
Sees.
And because God sees—
we can remain:
Faithful.

Something Worth Pondering

The world has its own definition of:
Greatness.
God's kingdom has another.
The world remembers celebrities.
Kings.
Generals.
The wealthy.
The powerful.
The visible.
But when heaven speaks of reward, it includes:
The servants.
The prophets.
The saints.
Those who fear God's name.
The small.
And the great.
Perhaps one of the great surprises of eternity will be discovering how many people heaven considered important whom earth barely:
Noticed.
The unknown prayer warrior.
The faithful caregiver.
The quiet servant.
The believer who endured without:
Applause.
The pastor who faithfully loved fifty people and never became:
Famous.
The person whose name history:
Forgot.
God did:
Not.
The world measures visibility.

God remembers faithfulness.

Ask Yourself This:

Am I discouraged because faithfulness has not received the recognition I hoped for?
Can I entrust unresolved injustice to the God who sees what I cannot see and knows what I cannot know?
And am I living in a way that cares for what God loves—His people, His truth, and the creation that ultimately belongs to Him?

A Closer Look — Revelation 11:19

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”
— Revelation 11:19, KJV

And then heaven:
Opens.
After trumpets.
Witnesses.
Death.
Resurrection.
Earthquake.
Woe.
Kingdom.
Worship.
Judgment.
Reward.
John's eyes are lifted once more toward:
God.
The temple in heaven is:
Opened.
The ark of God's covenant is:
Seen.
And then creation itself seems to:
Respond.
Lightning.
Voices.
Thunder.
Earthquake.
Hail.
Chapter 11 does not end by directing our attention toward the:
Beast.
It does not end with the nations:
Raging.
It does not end with bodies lying in the:
Street.
It does not even end with the earth:
Shaking.
It ends with heaven:
Open.
God's covenant:

Remembered.
And His presence impossible to:
Ignore.

1. “Then”

Once again John moves the vision:
Forward.
The seventh trumpet has:
Sounded.
The kingdom has been:
Proclaimed.
The elders have:
Worshiped.
The nations have:
Raged.
Judgment and reward have been:
Announced.
Then—
John sees the temple of God in:
Heaven.
The vision moves from proclamation toward:
Presence.

2. The Temple Is Opened

Earlier in Chapter 11, John was told to measure a:
Temple.
Now he sees the temple in:
Heaven.
Whatever interpretive questions we may have concerning the relationship between these temple images, John clearly directs our attention upward:
Again.
Heaven is:
Opened.
The dwelling associated with God's presence becomes:
Visible.

3. Revelation Keeps Opening Heaven

This has happened before.
John saw a door standing open in:
Heaven.
He was invited to:
Come up.
He saw the throne.
The elders.
The living creatures.
The scroll.

The Lamb.
Again and again Revelation pulls back the visible world and says:
There is more.
Earth is not the whole:
Story.

4. Sometimes Faith Needs an Open Heaven

We live most of our lives looking at what is immediately in front of:
Us.
Bills.
Work.
Illness.
Relationships.
Conflict.
News.
Loss.
Responsibility.
All real.
All deserving attention.
But Revelation repeatedly expands our field of:
Vision.
Sometimes faith does not need the circumstances immediately:
Changed.
Sometimes faith needs its field of vision:
Expanded.

5. The Temple Belongs to God

John identifies it as God's:
Temple.
That sounds obvious.
But throughout Revelation, ownership and allegiance:
Matter.
The beast claims.
Babylon claims.
Kings claim.
Empires claim.
Yet heaven belongs to:
God.
The temple is:
His.
The throne is:
His.
The kingdom is:
His.
History is ultimately:

His.

6. The Temple Is Open

Not hidden.
Not sealed.
Not:
Closed.
Opened.
John is permitted to:
See.
Revelation itself means:
Unveiling.
Something normally beyond human sight is being:
Shown.
Not everything.
But what God has decided His people need to:
Know.

7. We Are Again Reminded of Our Guardrail

Revelation does not tell us everything God:
Knows.
It tells us everything God decided we needed to:
Know.
And what does He show John here?
Not a timetable.
Not the identity of every mysterious figure.
Not an explanation of every unanswered:
Question.
He shows him:
The temple.
And within it—
the ark of the:
Covenant.

8. The Ark Appears

This is one of the most striking images in the:
Verse.
The ark of God's covenant is:
Seen.
For readers familiar with Israel's Scriptures, the ark carries enormous:
Meaning.
Covenant.
Presence.
Holiness.
Mercy.
Faithfulness.

The history of God's relationship with His people echoes through this:
Image.

9. We Should Let the Image Speak Before We Make It Speculate

The appearance of the ark has naturally generated many:
Questions.
Is John describing a literal heavenly ark?
Is this the heavenly reality corresponding to Israel's earthly:
Ark?
What exactly does the vision mean about the relationship between earthly sanctuary and heavenly:
Temple?
Interesting:
Questions.
But John does not pause to answer:
Them.
So neither should we pretend that he:
Did.
The image itself gives us plenty.

10. The Important Word May Be “Covenant”

John does not merely say:
Ark.
He identifies it with God's:
Covenant.
That directs us toward:
Relationship.
Promise.
Faithfulness.
God has bound Himself to His purposes.
He has not forgotten what He:
Promised.

11. Covenant Means God Remembers

Human beings:
Forget.
We forget promises.
Forget commitments.
Forget people.
Forget what God has already:
Done.
God does:
Not.

The appearance of the ark after the seventh trumpet is a powerful reminder that God's final purposes arise from His enduring:
Faithfulness.

12. God Has Not Forgotten His People

Think about where Chapter 11 has taken:
Us.
The holy city is:
Trampled.
The witnesses testify in:
Sackcloth.
The beast kills:
Them.
Their bodies lie in the:
Street.
The world celebrates their:
Death.
For three and a half days, it looks as though God's servants have been:
Abandoned.
Then God breathes life into:
Them.
Calls them:
Up.
The seventh trumpet:
Sounds.
And now the ark of the covenant is:
Seen.
God did not:
Forget.

13. The Covenant Was Present Even When the Street Suggested Otherwise

That may be one of the great pastoral truths of this:
Chapter.
When the witnesses were lying dead in the street—
the covenant had not:
Failed.
When the nations were raging—
the covenant had not:
Failed.
When the city was being trampled—
the covenant had not:
Failed.
When heaven seemed silent—
God had not:

Forgotten.
Appearances did not cancel:
Promise.

14. God's Faithfulness Is Not Measured by the Appearance of the Moment

We often make that:
Mistake.
Something painful happens and we immediately ask:
Where is God?
A prayer remains unanswered and we wonder:
Has God forgotten?
A faithful person suffers and we think:
Has the promise failed?
Chapter 11 tells us to keep:
Reading.
Never make a final judgment about God's faithfulness from an unfinished:
Chapter.

15. The Ark Is Seen

John does not merely know the ark is:
There.
He sees:
It.
What had been hidden is made:
Visible.
The symbol of covenant faithfulness stands inside the opened heavenly:
Temple.
After everything John has witnessed, God gives him something solid to:
See.
I have not forgotten.

16. Presence and Promise Belong Together

The temple speaks of God's:
Presence.
The ark speaks of God's:
Covenant.
Presence.
Promise.
Together.
God is not merely powerful.
He is:
Faithful.
He is not merely transcendent.
He is the God who binds Himself in relationship to His:

People.

17. Power Without Faithfulness Would Be Terrifying

Verse 17 called God:
Almighty.
Verse 18 announced His:
Judgment.
Verse 19 shows us the:
Covenant.
That matters.
The One with unlimited power is also the One who keeps His:
Word.
The Judge is faithful.
The Almighty remembers His:
Promise.

18. God's Character Holds the Whole Vision Together

Power.
Holiness.
Justice.
Mercy.
Faithfulness.
These are not competing parts of:
God.
He does not stop being loving when He:
Judges.
He does not stop being holy when He shows:
Mercy.
He does not stop being faithful when His people:
Suffer.
God remains:
God.

19. Then Come the Signs

After the temple opens and the ark is seen, the vision erupts with:
Signs.
Lightning.
Voices.
Thunder.
Earthquake.
Heavy hail.
The scene is not:
Quiet.
Creation seems to tremble before the presence of:
God.

20. These Are Familiar Signs in Revelation

We have encountered similar imagery:
Before.
Lightning.
Thunder.
Voices.
Earthquake.
These signs accompany manifestations of divine:
Presence.
They remind us that God is not merely an idea to be:
Discussed.
His presence is:
Awesome.
Holy.
Overwhelming.

21. There Are Echoes of Sinai

The imagery naturally recalls God's manifestation at:
Sinai.
Thunder.
Lightning.
The mountain shaking.
The people confronted with the terrifying holiness of:
God.
Again, we should speak of:
Echo.
Not identity.
John's imagery draws upon the great biblical vocabulary of divine:
Presence.

22. The God of Revelation Is Not Tame

There is a tendency to reduce God to someone comfortably:
Manageable.
A God who never disrupts.
Never judges.
Never confronts.
Never overwhelms.
Revelation refuses that:
Reduction.
The temple opens—
and creation:
Shakes.

23. Holiness Is Beautiful and Terrifying

We sometimes treat holiness merely as moral:

Cleanliness.
It includes that.
But biblical holiness also carries the overwhelming otherness and majesty of:
God.
God is not merely a larger version of:
Us.
He is:
God.
The lightning and thunder remind us that divine presence should never become:
Casual.

24. Yet the Ark Is There

And this is what makes the scene so:
Beautiful.
Lightning.
Thunder.
Earthquake.
Hail.
And:
Covenant.
Majesty and:
Faithfulness.
Power and:
Promise.
Holiness and:
Relationship.
The God before whom creation trembles is the same God who remembers His:
People.

25. We Need Both Truths

If we emphasize God's power without His covenant faithfulness, we may end with:
Terror.
If we emphasize God's closeness while forgetting His holiness, we may end with:
Triviality.
Revelation gives us:
Both.
The God who shakes creation is the God who keeps:
Covenant.
The God who keeps covenant is the God before whom creation:
Shakes.

26. The Earthquake Returns

Earthquakes appear repeatedly in:
Revelation.
They signal upheaval.
Judgment.
Divine:
Intervention.
Things humanity believes are stable begin to:
Move.
The ground itself refuses to remain:
Still.

27. Human Beings Love What Feels Stable

We build lives around things we believe will:
Remain.
Institutions.
Economies.
Governments.
Careers.
Buildings.
Plans.
Even our own:
Bodies.
Then something happens and what seemed permanent begins to:
Shake.
Revelation asks us to place our confidence somewhere that cannot be:
Shaken.

28. The Kingdom Cannot Be Shaken

Verse 15 announced a reign lasting forever and:
Ever.
Verse 19 shows the earth:
Shaking.
There is the:
Contrast.
Creation shakes.
Kingdom remains.
Earthly powers shake.
God remains.
Circumstances shake.
God's covenant remains.

29. Hail Appears

The verse ends with heavy:
Hail.

Hail carries biblical associations with divine:
Judgment.
The Exodus naturally comes to:
Mind.
Once again Revelation draws upon the language of God's mighty acts in Israel's:
Story.
The God who acted in history has not ceased to:
Act.

30. Exodus Echoes Continue

Chapter 11 has already given us:
Waters turned to blood.
Plagues.
Prophetic authority reminiscent of Moses.
Now:
Hail.
The echoes remind us of the God who confronted oppressive power and delivered His:
People.
But again—
echoes are not:
Name tags.
They help us understand God's action without requiring us to force every detail into an exact historical:
Parallel.

31. Judgment Is Not Random

Lightning.
Earthquake.
Hail.
These images could seem chaotic if separated from their:
Context.
But they follow:
The kingdom.
Worship.
Judgment.
Reward.
Covenant.
This is not meaningless cosmic:
Violence.
It belongs within God's movement toward setting creation:
Right.

32. The Chapter Ends With God

This deserves emphasis.

Think of everything Chapter 11 could have ended:
With.
The beast.
The dead witnesses.
The celebrating world.
The earthquake.
The raging nations.
The destroyers of the earth.
Instead—
the chapter ends with:
God.
His temple.
His covenant.
His presence.
His power.
That is not:
Accidental.

33. Revelation Keeps Reorienting Our Eyes

We naturally stare at the:
Beast.
Revelation says:
Look higher.
We stare at the:
Street.
Look higher.
We stare at the:
Earthquake.
Look higher.
We stare at the:
Woe.
Look higher.
The temple is:
Open.

34. The Beast Is Never the Center of Revelation

This will become increasingly important as we enter Chapter: 12
Dragons and beasts are memorable:
Images.
They can dominate our:
Imagination.
But they are not the center of the:
Book.
Jesus:
Is.

God's throne:
Is.
God's kingdom:
Is.
The Lamb:
Is.
If our reading of Revelation leaves us more fascinated with the beast than with the Lamb, we have lost the center of the:
Vision.

35. Before the Dragon—The Covenant

And now notice where John has brought us.
Chapter 12 will introduce the:
Dragon.
But before John shows us the dragon—
he shows us the:
Ark.
Before the enemy appears—
God's covenant is:
Visible.
Before conflict intensifies—
heaven is:
Open.
Before we see what the dragon will do—
we are reminded who God:
Is.

36. God Gives Us the Ending Before He Shows Us the Enemy

Verse 15 already announced the:
Kingdom.
Verse 19 shows the:
Covenant.
Then Chapter 12 will show the:
Dragon.
That order is profoundly:
Pastoral.
God does not introduce the dragon and leave His people wondering whether He can handle:
It.
He tells us who reigns:
First.
He reminds us who keeps covenant:
First.
Then He shows us the:

Conflict.

37. Revelation Gives Us the Ending So We Can Endure the Middle

Here our defining line returns with even greater:
Force.
Revelation gives us the ending so we can endure the middle.
We know the kingdom:
Wins.
We know the Lamb:
Reigns.
We know God's servants are:
Remembered.
We know the covenant still:
Stands.
Now we are ready to meet the:
Dragon.

38. The Open Temple Becomes a Doorway Into What Comes Next

Chapter 11 does not merely:
End.
It prepares us for a new perspective on the same great:
Conflict.
John is about to take us behind what we have already:
Seen.
Behind earthly persecution.
Behind imperial power.
Behind the suffering of God's:
People.
We will see a deeper spiritual:
Conflict.
Woman.
Child.
Dragon.
War in heaven.
Beasts.
But we enter those visions knowing something the dragon cannot:
Change.
God reigns.

39. The Dragon Enters a Story Whose Ending Has Already Been Announced

That changes how we:
Read.

We do not meet the dragon asking:
Who will win?
We meet the dragon asking:
How will the already-promised victory unfold?
That is a very different:
Question.
Fear asks whether God will:
Win.
Faith asks how God's victory will be:
Revealed.

40. The Covenant Is Bigger Than the Crisis

Every generation has its:
Crisis.
Some are personal.
Some cultural.
Some global.
And every crisis feels enormous while we are living inside:
It.
But God's covenant faithfulness is larger than any moment in:
History.
The crisis is temporary.
God's faithfulness is:
Not.

41. The Street Was Real—But It Was Not Ultimate

We should never minimize what happened earlier in the:
Chapter.
The witnesses really:
Died.
Their bodies really lay in the:
Street.
Their enemies really:
Celebrated.
Faith does not pretend suffering is:
Imaginary.
But neither does faith confuse suffering with the final:
Word.
The street was real.
So was the open:
Temple.

42. Friday Was Real—But So Was Sunday

We have used this image throughout our journey:
Together.
Good Friday was:

Real.
The cross was real.
Death was real.
Grief was:
Real.
But Friday was not the final:
Chapter.
Sunday came.
Chapter 11 follows that same great Christian:
Pattern.
Witness.
Death.
Vindication.
Kingdom.
Covenant.

43. Never Put a Period Where God Has Placed a Comma

Again our earlier line returns:
Here.
The dead witnesses looked like a:
Period.
God placed a:
Comma.
The raging nations looked like a:
Period.
God placed a:
Comma.
The woes looked like:
Periods.
They:
Passed.
And now heaven:
Opens.

44. The Final Image Is Assurance

Yes, there is:
Lightning.
Thunder.
Earthquake.
Hail.
But behind all of it stands the opened:
Temple.
And within the temple:
The ark.
Covenant.

Promise.
Faithfulness.
God has not:
Forgotten.
That may be the deepest assurance of the:
Verse.

45. God Has Not Forgotten

Perhaps someone reading these words someday will need nothing more complicated than:
That.
God has not:
Forgotten.
Not His promise.
Not His people.
Not your faithfulness.
Not your tears.
Not the injustice.
Not the prayer.
Not the story He is still:
Writing.
The temple is open.
The covenant still:
Stands.
God has not:
Forgotten.

Pastoral Reflection

There are seasons when heaven can feel:
Closed.
Prayer seems to rise no farther than the:
Ceiling.
Circumstances refuse to:
Change.
The world looks chaotic.
Faithfulness seems unnoticed.
And God's promises can feel very far:
Away.
Chapter 11 understands that:
Feeling.
It gives us witnesses lying dead in the:
Street.
It gives us enemies:
Celebrating.
It gives us nations:

Raging.
It gives us:
Woe.
But it does not leave us:
There.
John looks again.
And heaven is:
Open.
The temple is:
Visible.
The ark of the covenant is:
There.
God has not:
Forgotten.
Sometimes faith endures until God changes the:
Circumstances.
Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith endures all the way:
Home.
But faith endures because the God who made the promise remains faithful to the:
Promise.
When heaven feels closed—
it is not.
When God seems absent—
He is not.
When the story seems finished—
keep reading.
The temple is:
Open.
The covenant still:
Stands.
And God has not:
Forgotten.

Something Worth Pondering

Chapter 11 began with a measuring:
Rod.
It ends with an open:
Temple.
Between those two images we have seen:
Witness.
Opposition.

Death.
Mockery.
Resurrection.
Ascension.
Earthquake.
Woe.
Trumpet.
Kingdom.
Judgment.
Reward.
And covenant.
Through it all one truth has remained:
God is faithful.
The witnesses were not forgotten.
The suffering was not meaningless.
The raging nations were not ultimate.
The destroyers did not escape accountability.
The kingdom did not fail.
And the covenant did not:
Disappear.
Now John is ready to show us the:
Dragon.
But before he does—
God opens heaven.
And perhaps that is exactly where Chapter 11 needs to:
End.
Not with our eyes on the enemy.
But with our eyes on:
God.
Before the dragon—there is the covenant.
Before the conflict—there is the kingdom.
Before the middle is finished—we have been given the ending.
Revelation gives us the ending so we can endure the middle.

Ask Yourself This:

When heaven seems closed, am I willing to trust that God's silence does not mean His absence?
And when the next chapter of my life contains something I cannot yet see, can I enter it remembering:
The kingdom still belongs to God.
The covenant still stands. And God has not forgotten me.