

Revelation 11 – Words of Judgement and Preservation

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Date: 29 January 2023

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[0 : 00] Good to see you. If you have a Bible, tell me to Revelation chapter 10.! Revelation 12 and 13 are notoriously difficult, not really for us to understand, but for us to apply.

I think if you agree with me, if you've read ahead in Revelation 11, you're like, well, great. What do I do with this information? And so we're kind of a little bit at that stage in Revelation where there's just some things going on where it's difficult to be genuine and honest with the text.

This is what the text says. And then this is how I think it works out in our lives. There's lots of things we can say about how things work out in our lives, but sometimes they're just not genuine to the text. And that's something called eisegesis.

And so we don't want to do that because that's just torturing the text. So just be good for us just to pray real quick and just ask God's help for that because it's his spirit that brings the application to our lives.

And so let's do that really quickly before we get into the text. Father, we just come to you this morning again. Lord, we thank you for this place, this time, Lord. And we believe, Lord, that as we open your word, this is your word to us today.

[1 : 42] Lord, it is your word. Lord, it is good for us. Lord, we also believe, Lord, that there is something here that is good for us right now for our situation for us today.

Lord, we want to come to your word, Lord, and we want to submit to it, to your spirit's work in us. Lord, we pray, Lord, that your spirit would be at work in our hearts today.

Lord, help our minds to focus on what your text says, to actually focus on what it actually says rather than what we think it says. Lord, and then to stop and pause and ask you to speak, that we may hear your voice speaking to us through your word today.

Lord, may we be ready to receive, ready to hear, Lord, and ready to turn to you. Lord, we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right, so I want to pick it up at the beginning of Revelation chapter 10, because as I said last week, Revelation 10, Revelation 11, Revelation 12, all kind of run into each other.

[2 : 53] We've come to an interlude in the chronology, in the timescale. So John is kind of asking the question, all right, what else is going on during this time? And we go back, some people say we go back right to the beginning, right to Revelation 6.

Some say we go back to Revelation 8 or Revelation 9, but we go back. This is a different layer of what else is going on as John is recording this revelation about Jesus.

And so this is what he writes in verse 10. He says, Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head. His face was like the sun, his legs like pillar of fire.

He had a little scroll open in his hand, and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice like a lion roaring. And when he called out, the seven thunders sounded.

And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down. And that's pretty much as far as we got last week, exploring the fact that sometimes God refuses to tell us why he's doing what he's doing, and how we have to submit to that, even though we don't like it very much.

[4 : 16] And so verse 5 continues with this whole narrative about John taking the scroll and eating it.

So he says, Then the voice that I heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the scene on the land.

And so I went to the angel, and I told him to give me the little scroll. I'm sure that there was a pleas in there. Like, you know, I'm sure he had his manners. And he said to me, Take and eat.

It will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be made as sweet as honey. And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel, and I ate it.

And it was sweet as honey in my mouth. And when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. So we mentioned last week how this was John becoming part of the actual narrative.

[5 : 42] Like before he's just been a bystander. He's just been kind of seeing what's going on. And he's writing. He's seeing, writing, seeing, writing, seeing, writing. Now all of a sudden, John is being invited actually into the story.

Did you get that? He's like, would you take this? Become part of the story. He's become more than a bystander, right? So I want us to look at this thread that's going to go through this, well, chapter 10 and then through to chapter 11.

And the thread is about him taking the words, and those words becoming words of either judgment or preservation. So words that he eats, the scroll, become words of judgment or words of preservation.

I know right at the beginning, and this is just something for us to maybe think about, dwell on, is that right at the beginning of our time this morning, is that we notice that you can't be used by God unless you're obedient to God, right?

So John is told, take the scroll, eat it. And if it was me, I'd be like, say what now? Because that's not a normal, I mean, it's not a normal thing to do, right? To take a book and then just start eating it.

[7 : 06] But he's told, eat this book, eat this scroll. And he's become part of this dream, this vision, this revelation. But before he can be used of God, so in verse 11 he said, you must prophesy about.

So he's prophesying now. Before he can be used by God, you have to be able to walk with God. You have to be obedient to God. And this is the pattern, isn't it?

I mean, Saul's big, or the big judgment, I guess, against Saul, King Saul, was that he was only partially obedient. He wasn't fully obedient.

That doesn't mean that we are called to be completely obedient straight away in terms of, you know, walking with God in perfection. But what he calls us to do, he asks us to step out in obedience.

And then, you know, he asks us to step out more, and then more, and then more. And as we do that, God is giving us the ability to not only live for him, but then also to minister for him.

[8 : 17] And so John, right at the beginning, would you note that John, obedience has to come first, and then God gives gifts and calls us to use them. And that's the pattern here. John is told to eat the scroll, and as he does, he's given this gift of prophecy.

Verse 11 says, you must prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings. And what is interesting is that he is told to prophesy.

And the kind of prophecy that we see in chapter 11 is actually wrapped in the language, once again, in the language of judgment and preservation.

And the reason for that is because the whole enactment of eating this little scroll is a reference to Numbers chapter 5.

Now, we're not going to read Numbers chapter 5 because Numbers chapter 5 is long, and it's quite strange.

[9 : 19] Can I just say that? There are some chapters in the Bible that were okay to say that are just quite strange. I mean, like Revelation 11 is one of those, right? Which we're going to look at this morning. Numbers 5 is one of those, all right?

If you haven't read it, go home this afternoon and read it. But let me just tell you the story. Let me tell you what's going on in Numbers chapter 5. And Revelation 11 is built on Numbers chapter 5, all right?

So Numbers chapter 5, we see God give Moses a command and a method to test whether a woman has been committing adultery or not.

Okay? So, you know, the husband brings the woman to Moses, and Moses goes, well, I don't know whether she's telling the truth. And God says, I can tell you, I can give you a method to find out.

It's like the first lie to test to test, right? And so Moses is told to command a priest to take a pot, and specifically an earthen vessel, a clay pot, fill it with holy water, then take some dust from the ground and put it into the pot.

[10 : 33] He's then commanded to write, and notice, to write words in a book. Right? He's commanded to write words in a book, and then put that book, get this, put the book into the pot of water.

Make sense? Of course it doesn't make sense. Right? But that's what God is commanding Moses to do. And then the command is to drink the water.

The woman is supposed to drink the water. Now, you think that's, I think that's just barmy. It's like, what? But that's the command. And God says to Moses, if the woman, when the woman drinks to the pot and nothing happens, like she just drinks the water and everything's like just great.

She can go free. She hasn't been committing adultery. Her husband will know. You'll know. She'll know. Everything's good. But if that water causes vomiting and diarrhea, then she's guilty.

That's numbers five. And all of us are like, what? But the whole issue is words of the book, judgment and preservation.

[11 : 47] When a group of men bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus in John chapter eight. Remember that Jesus stooped down. What did he do? He wrote words on the ground, took the dust, put it in a box, took the dust and presumably words of judgment.

What happened with the men who brought the accusation? They ran away. They were found out judged. What happened to the woman? Preserved. All Jesus is doing in John chapter eight is enacting numbers chapter five.

Right? When we get this strange verse in Ezekiel chapter three, where the Lord says to Ezekiel, son of man, eat whatever you find here, eat this scroll, and then do what?

Go and speak to the house of Israel. Eat the scroll, go and speak words of judgment and preservation to Israel. Same thing happens in Jeremiah. So the issue in this chapter, and as we see in chapter 10, and then we flick over to chapter 11, the issue is words, judgment, and preservation.

And they're all drawing from this idea in numbers chapter five. So with that as a backdrop, chapter 11 opens with John taking up the role of prophet, prophet of judgment and preservation.

[13 : 05] He's going to speak words that judge and preserve. He says, Then I was given chapter one or chapter 11, verse one. Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff.

And I was told, rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there. But do not measure the court outside the temple. Leave that out for it is given over to the nations.

And they will trample the holy city for 42 months. And I will grant authority to my two witnesses. And they will prophesy for 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth.

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.

They have the power to shut the sky that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying. And they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they desire.

[14 : 12] So we're simply following the pattern of Numbers chapter five in this prophecy. The issue is the words of the book and specifically John's words as he is prophesying now in chapter 11.

And what happens is judgment and preservation. So John eats the words of the scroll and what follows is this big drama. And that drama is of two characters.

And these two characters are, again, bringing judgment and preservation. And I think that we see it when we get into the detail. We see verse one, John says that I was given a measuring rod like a staff.

Now, this is an image drawn from Ezekiel 40 verse three. So Ezekiel 40 verse three says this. When he brought me there. So this person is sort of showing it's a vision.

He's escorted in this vision. So Ezekiel says, when he brought me there, behold, there was a man whose appearance was like bronze with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand.

[15 : 22] And he was standing in the gateway. So and then he proceeds to measure the temple just like we've seen John instructed to do. And the idea of measuring something has a twofold application.

Now, this won't be a surprise to you if you've already been taking notes. The idea in the Bible of measuring something means two things. Could you guess what it is?

Judgment and preservation. OK, so we get this theme running through this chapter. There's a few places in the Old Testament where you see someone measuring something with the plan to destroy the thing that they're measuring.

So 2 Kings 21 verse 13. God says, I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plumb line of the house of Ahab. I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.

Or sticking in the dishwasher. The same deal, right? Lamentations 2 verse 8. So also, you know, Amos 7, Isaiah 34 all talk about measuring something in order to destroy that thing that's been measured.

[16 : 44] But we also see that the thing that is measured is not only destroyed, but the thing that isn't destroyed is then preserved. Right?

So 2 Samuel chapter 8 verse 2 says he defeated Moab and he measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground. Two lines he measured to be put to death and one line to be spared.

So sometimes there's a measurement in terms of measuring what I'm going to destroy. And sometimes I'm measuring something which I'm going to preserve.

And look, I think, you know, God does that, doesn't he? Like he endeavors to call to repentance sinful people that he loves and wants to forgive and save rather than judge.

God could judge any one of us immediately, couldn't he? God could judge any one of us immediately. And without any other reason than that we deserve it. But we don't get what we deserve.

[17 : 47] As God's people, we don't get what we deserve. God is always drawing a circle around those who are his, which defines those who are his and those who are not.

He's always doing that. He's always walking outside of that circle into the space outside to draw people into the space inside. Even in incredibly difficult times and sinful times, God is sending his people out to the streets and the alleys and the pubs and the restaurants and inviting them to the banquet.

Just as he told us in the New Testament. That's how good and gracious God is. Ezekiel 42 says this. He measured it on both sides.

It had a wall around it, 500 cubits long, 500 cubits broad. To make a separation. What's the separation? Between that which is holy and common or holy and unholy or gods and not gods.

So we have this kind of both thing going on here. The temple is being measured so that one thing can be judged and the other can be preserved. And the angel said to John in chapter 10, just remember, eat the words and there will be both bitterness and sweetness.

[19 : 02] There will be both judgment and preservation. And that's what's going on in here in chapter 11. But the language is a little bit odd.

Would you agree? Because he's not only told to measure the temple. And we'll chat about what that might be in a moment. And almost none of you will agree with me, but that's fine.

But he's also told to measure the altar and those who worship there. Interesting. Don't miss that. He's not only told to measure the temple.

He's also told to measure the sanctuary. And he's also told to measure the people who are there. And of course, this is a question of whether we measure up.

The words are going forth. Do we measure up to judgment or preservation? Now, look, the thing about the temple is hotly debated, and I'll tell you why.

[20 : 10] There seems to be two temples mentioned in this passage. Two temples in this passage. The first, obviously, is verse one we've just read.

Rise and measure the temple of God. Right? So temple number one. Temple number two. Scroll down to verse 19. Then God's temple in heaven was opened.

And that seems to be a different temple. Otherwise, the phrase heaven, in heaven, would be completely redundant. Just say heaven. We're seeing a contrast of one temple and another temple.

One temple and a heavenly temple. Now, this is where I'm going to upset everyone apart from myself. So what is this first temple?

Now, you may never have thought about it. But now we're going to think about it. John says, or God says, rise, or the angel says, rise, measure the temple of God.

[21 : 15] Now, look, there's some who think that this is actually referring to John measuring Herod's temple, also known as the second temple. All right? So the second temple was started in 516 BC, something like that, and then was destroyed 70 AD.

Right? So Herod's temple, second temple, it's the temple that was around in John's day. It was the temple that was around in Jesus' day. And that's one view.

Now, if that's the case, obviously, the implication is that Revelation has to be written before 70 AD. Because after 70 AD, there is no temple. It doesn't exist.

Now, other people obviously argue the reverse. They would say, no, no, no, the first temple is a spiritual temple. So the temple in verse 1 is a spiritual temple. It's not an actual temple.

It's a spiritual temple because verse 19 doesn't introduce us to a new temple or a different temple. It's defining the first one. And grammatically, quite often, we do get, especially in Paul's letters, he will say something and then later on he will define what he's just said in greater detail.

[22 : 30] So when we get to verse 19, John says that God's temple in heaven was open. We're simply being told what the first temple actually is. So they're both a heavenly temple, a spiritual temple.

Now, here's the great irony. The irony is that those who want to interpret Revelation the most literally have to opt for the spiritual view here.

Otherwise, their system doesn't work. But those who want to interpret Revelation allegorically or symbolically, they have to opt for the literal view.

Otherwise, their system doesn't work. Great irony. And it's a problem. Right? And so let's chat.

Let me firstly say that there is a third view. Actually, there's more than three views. What am I saying? There's like, you know, there's probably 20 other views or whatever.

[23 : 32] But there is a third view that sees the temple as figurative and representing the church.

So that is a kind of allegorical view that I think we can just quickly discount. Because the temple as the dwelling place of God, i.e. the church, is clearly not in view here.

The Jewish temple. And, you know, he'll tell us this in a minute. He'll say, in the city. And if there is any doubt, we say, what city?

What city are you talking about? And then he goes, the city where Jesus was crucified. Like, that's not only one city. The city in Jerusalem. It can't be. It can't be the church. So, additionally, you know, we see in verse 2 that the outer court and the entire city experience is being trampled on by the Gentiles.

So the temple and the court stand for something that best contrasts with Gentiles. I.e. something Jewish. Now, look, perhaps the most compelling reason to reject the idea that the sanctuary represents the church is that actually we're left with a much bigger problem.

[24 : 55] If we go down that route. And the problem is the answer to the question, who are the worshippers that are being measured along with the temple and the altar? If the temple is the church, then who are the worshippers?

Well, I think the only way to read Revelation 11 is to understand that the temple is a literal temple. So what I mean by literal temple, I mean that it has bricks.

All right. And it has cement. And it's a place that you can go to. Okay. But I don't think it's second temple.

I think it's third temple. Now, that's confused some of you already. So I think what this is referring to is a temple that will exist during the future period just before Christ returns.

Now, I know that there is a crazy amount of problems with that view. But contextually, in terms of exegetically, what the Bible says, that's the view with the least problems.

[26 : 06] What does that mean? Well, it means that this is the temple. It's not the second temple that was around in John's day and was eventually destroyed by the Romans. And it's also not a spiritual temple that represents the church or anything else.

That this is a third temple that hasn't been built yet. Both Daniel 9 and Daniel 11 talk about temple sacrifices taking place at the same time as the rise of the Antichrist.

Now, for those of you who have been here for a little while and have been going through Revelation with us, in Revelation 6, we saw the rise of the Antichrist. And we're going to see the Antichrist again in chapter 13.

And Daniel 9 and 11 talk about how the Antichrist, and let me just read it to you, chapter 9, verse 27. It says that he, that is this Antichrist figure, whoever he is, right?

He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week. That's one week is seven years. And for half of the week, three and a half years, good. Getting our maths out.

[27 : 11] He shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. Well, look at that. Hold on a second. That can only happen if there's a temple. Sacrifice and offering only happen in a temple. Daniel 12, verse 11.

From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away. Well, that can only happen if there's a temple. 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 4. Paul sees one in opposition to God who takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

Well, look, that's not a spiritual temple. If there is one in opposition to God taking the throne of God in the temple of God, we're in trouble. Right?

This is a literal temple. Now, look, I understand that that is a bold claim. I also understand that there is a whole bunch of teaching that comes before that to get to that point, which we're not going to cover today.

The temple, as I see it, that John sees that he's told to measure, is a literal temple that no one has built yet.

[28 : 13] Now, if that's true, what comes in verse 2 is significant. Remember, John is prophesying about two things, judgment and preservation. Judgment and preservation to come.

That's the point of the whole last part of chapter 10. The last part of chapter 10 is an introduction to chapter 11. He says, Do not measure the court outside the temple.

Leave that out. For it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for 42 months. Now, look, this is just a precursor to this.

Just think about this. You know, one of us escaped your notice this week. All of the troubles in Israel again this week. What is the problem in Israel? The problem in Israel is the temple mount.

The problem in Israel is that the Jews want a temple. And they want it the same place that they have one of the biggest mosques in the world, most important mosques in the world. Same place. That's the problem.

[29 : 14] And so what John is seeing is that the temple, the courts outside of the temple will be trampled.

It will be given over to the nations. Is that true? I mean, we see that now. And the temple hasn't even been built. But a temple mount has been given over to the nations. So, look, would you notice again that there is a division between the temple and the courtyard.

Judgment and preservation is going on all the way through this chapter. He says, Now look, 42 months is 1260 days.

I don't have time to get into lunar calendar versus solar calendar. And all of the Jewish sects in the second temple period that were arguing about which calendar is right. But what we do see in this text is two witnesses that are there to bring judgment and preservation in the same way John is seeing it happen.

Now, why two? You may just say, well, that was a good number. Well, I think there's a biblical pattern for why two. The number two is the number of minimum witnesses needed to secure conviction.

[30 : 37] Okay? So you go up in court and someone says, you know, I'm accusing you of like X, Y, Z. And you can go, well, bring the witnesses. If two witnesses come and say, yeah, I saw you do that, you're done for.

Minimum number of two. Joshua chapter 2, verse 1. Joshua sent in how many spies to scope out the land? Two. Right?

Moses sent in 12. Two came back. Joshua sent back two. Right? John chapter 20, verse 12. There were two angels were at the tomb in Easter morning.

Witnesses to the resurrection. John chapter 6, verse 7. Jesus sends out how many witnesses two by two? Right? He sends them out, doesn't he? Jesus said in Matthew chapter 18 that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three.

Minimum two. Paul also alluded to the need for a minimum of two witnesses to validate a judgment. He says in 2 Corinthians 13, This is the third time I'm coming to you.

[31 : 43] Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 1 Timothy 5, 19. Don't admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. And so these two witnesses are witnesses against the nations to validate the judgment.

To secure conviction. And they're on earth seemingly for three and a half years. Seemingly in the run up to chapter 19 where we see Jesus return.

Now of course the big debate is who these two people are. Now you may say I don't care. Well, switch off for five minutes.

The early church fathers thought that these two were Enoch and Elijah. So Tertullian, Arrhenius, Hippolytus.

They all talk about these two witnesses about being Enoch and Elijah principally because neither of those two saw death. Enoch was and was not. He was taken. Elijah went up into clouds in the chariot.

[32 : 48] Others argue that it's Moses and Elijah. Elijah and they argued that on the basis that Moses and Elijah brought the same kind of signs that these two witnesses bring.

And also Moses had like a sketchy death. Right? Like in Jude, you encounter this passage in Jude where the angels are fighting Satan over his body.

You're like, what? All right. So there's an argument to be said that this is Moses and Elijah. Elijah. Certainly we see in Malachi chapter four.

Malachi says, behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And one of the on the question of who the messenger was.

That was going to come before Jesus. Jesus says that it wasn't John the Baptist, but Elijah. Right? So Matthew 11, Jesus says, if you're willing to accept it, that he, the messenger, is Elijah, who is to come.

[33 : 50] Moses said that the Lord, your God will raise up for you a prophet like me, like Moses from among you, from your brothers. It is him you shall listen to.

And so certainly both were seen with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in the preview of the coming kingdom. Moses and Elijah. Moses and Elijah.

And we don't understand verse four. So then we go, well, it must be Moses and Elijah. And yet. That's to remain fairly ignorant of where that that verse is coming from, because that verse is actually a reference to the power of the Holy Spirit at work in these two individuals.

So just flick over with me to Zechariah chapter four. It's going to come on the screen, but it's a fairly long passage. This is where that phrase comes from.

So the phrase, these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of all the earth. Well, who are they? Well, we get an indication in terms of where Zechariah, where it comes from.

[35 : 29] So the angel who talked with me again came and woke me like a man who was woken out of his sleep. And he said to me, what do you see? And I said, I see. And behold, a lampstand of all gold and a bowl on top of it and seven lamps on it and seven lips on each of the lamps that are on top of it.

And there were two olive trees by it. One on the right of the bowl and the other on the left. And I said to the angel who talked to me, what are these, my Lord? And the angel who talked with me answered and said, do you not know what these are?

And I said, no, that's why I asked you the question. And they said to me, now look, catch this phrase, what he says here. He says, this is the words of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

It's the same thing that he said in Hosea chapter one, which is the chapter where God turns his back on his own people. And he calls them to am I, which you are not my people.

And then he talks about how the restoration of the people of God will come about, how the restoration of Israel will come about. And he says this, he says, I will have mercy on the house of Judah and I will save them by the by the Lord their God.

[36 : 46] And then he says, I will not save them by bow or by sword or by by by war or by horses or by horsemen. I will. It won't be by might nor by power. That's why Zechariah says it's not by might nor by power, but by my spirit.

So then verse 11 of Zechariah chapter four says, he says, then I said to him, what are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand? That's what we want to know. That's Revelation chapter 11.

And a second time I answered and said, what are these two branches of the olive trees which are beside the two golden pipes which are from the Gulf, which which the golden oil is poured from?

And he said to me, do you not know these things? And he says, no, that's why I'm asking you. This is a fair question, isn't it? And he said, these are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

So in Zechariah, they're there. In Revelation, they're there. For me, that that that that that that can't be Moses and Elijah. They can't be Elijah and Enoch.

[37 : 54] They can't be Joshua and Zerubbabel. But they are what they are is probably potentially characters of them, their characteristics, personifications of them.

They're this idea of two characters who have been used mightily by the Holy Spirit, by God throughout time. I mean, they're not the reformers.

That's one of you. Right. That these aren't like two men who resisted papal authority. That's that's one of you.

Right. These these these two witnesses represent, if you like, Old Testament characters. Being raised up to restore Israel to her land.

Preservation. John is told in the last chapter, you must prophesy about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.

[38 : 55] And what we see in this chapter is is John prophesying the words of the book about the nations being judged and Israel being preserved. So this chapter is about in the whole chronology, in the whole story narrative of what's going on.

There is this assurance again that God will indeed judge sin. But he will preserve his people. He says, when I finished the testimony, I skip back to Revelation 11.

Let's just close out these these next few verses. He says, when they had finished their testimony. So when they had finished there, that's the two witnesses.

The beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically called Sodom and Egypt.

I love that. Like John says, it's where it's not Sodom. It's not Egypt. But symbolically, it's just sinful. Right. So he's like, he's helping us out.

[40 : 07] So very obviously, there's only one place in the world and that's Jerusalem. And for three and a half days.

Some people or some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents.

Like Christmas is going to be cancelled. And it's going to be like happy two witnesses death day. Right. Because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

And that's what God's word is. When God's word is a judgment to us, it's a torment to us, isn't it? But after the three and a half days, a breath of life from God entered them.

Now, would you notice the interesting switch of tenses? I have no idea what that means. It's just. Right. After three and a half days, breath of life of God entered them.

[41 : 23] And they stood up on their feet and great fear fell on those who saw them. Like when God's not finished with you, God's not finished with you. Right. When God has a job for you to do, he's going to ensure that job is done.

And here there is judgment to come upon the nations. And the Antichrist, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit.

So that tells me, look, let's just get this clear. The Antichrist isn't like, you know, back a few years ago, he was Obama. Then he was, you know, someone else.

Then he was Donald Trump. Then he was someone else. It's like, hold on a second. The beast is rising from the bottomless pit. So. The beast kills these guys.

And God says, I'm not done. And breathes life into them. And they stand up on their feet and great fear fell upon all who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven.

[42 : 31] So that is they, everyone who saw them, heard a voice from heaven saying to them, come up here. So they obeyed.

They went up to heaven in a cloud. And their enemies watched them. And verse 13 says, this is the outcome of judgment. At that hour, there was a great earthquake.

And a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake. And the rest were terrified. And gave glory. Or the word should be, they acknowledged that that was from God.

And the second woe has passed. And behold, the third woe is soon to come. And so some sobering words here about judgment.

Some sobering words about preservation. Peter says that the time has come for judgment to begin where? The house of God. And judgment begins with us.

[43 : 40] That's where it begins. Begins in our own hearts. And God has this, we don't call it torment, but it can be. We call it conviction. But it is God tormenting us.

Sometimes, you know, when we are harboring a sin, or we have this repeating sin, or whatever it may be, there is this torment of the Holy Spirit. And that is God's goodness to us.

That is God's mercy to us. And this chapter makes it clear that that mercy will one day come to an end. That there will be judgment.

But we can take courage that there also is preservation. That those who are gods are gods. Those who belong to the Lord belong to the Lord. And he will put a circle around his people.

And he will protect his people. And so can I encourage you this morning, if you are, you know, not right with the Lord, you can't expect to be used by the Lord.

[44 : 37] Don't take his mercy for approval. We talked about this before, haven't we? And now is a good time to turn to the Lord.

And so let's pray, commit this word to our hearts. Ask God to help us and apply these things to our own lives. Father, we want to acknowledge, first of all, that these words are difficult.

Much more putting them into practice. Lord, so we rest on the things that we do know, rather than be confused by the things that we don't.

Lord, we do know, Lord, that your mercies are new every morning. Lord, we do know, Lord, that we only have the breath that we have because you give it to us.

And Lord, we're thankful, Lord, that you have promised to keep us and preserve us, Lord, and protect us. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that you have given gifts to men and women who can be, that can be used for your glory and for our good.

[45 : 50] And yet, Lord, we also are aware, Lord, that you call us to obedience, Lord, each and every day. Each and every day, you call us to walk out with you.

Lord, and sometimes that is such a struggle, Lord. Lord, we, Lord, are so consumed by consumerism, by materialism, by the things of this world.

Lord, and we see in this chapter how one day, a world that is consumed by those things will be consumed by your judgment. Lord, we don't want to be part of that.

Lord, we don't want to be part of any kind of judgment from you. And yet, we know each and every day, Lord, that you are calling us to be judged, to judge our own lives.

And so, Lord, this morning, we want to just be tentative to what your Holy Spirit is speaking to us.

[46 : 53] Lord, there might be things in our lives, Lord, that we might not even be so aware of. Lord, that you are calling us to repent from and to walk with you. Lord, you call us to step out in obedience.

And Lord, when we do, Lord, there is that assurance of preservation. There is assurance of mercy. And so, on one hand, Lord, we want to turn to you and walk with you and escape judgment.

At the same time, Lord, we are thankful, Lord, for the mercies that come to us each and every day. And Lord, we pray, Lord, that you would teach us to walk with you, Lord, and to forsake the things of this world.

And Lord, we ask that we would each and every day be grateful for the mercy that you provide. Lord, we do pray, Lord, if there are those here this morning that don't know you.

Lord, would be today the day that they come to know you. And they would come to know you as a merciful and good God. Lord, we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.