

The Book of Revelation: “The Body They May Kill”
Revelation 11:1-14

*And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us. (Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress”)*

Know that God is sovereign in life and in death

- Chapter 11 occurs in this pause between the 6th and the 7th trumpet in the book of Revelation.
 - Chapter 10 discloses a divine commissioning to bear witness in the world.
 - Chapter 11 discloses the great opposition *and* the glorious outcome of that witness.
- God aims to have a people who worship and proclaim Him. (vv. 1-3)

... You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Exodus 19:6)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,... that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

- God’s people are trophies of grace, having been called by God to repentance and faith.
 - God people are trumpets of grace, calling the world to repentance and faith.
- The high calling of proclaiming God does not mean the absence of suffering. (v. 2)
 - Revelation contains multiple expressions of similar times—42 months, 1260 days, and “time, times, and half a time.”
 - These time expressions point to a bounded but intense time of suffering for God’s people.

He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. (Daniel 7:25)

- God is sovereign over our triumphs and our trials.
 - He is with us.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵ God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. ⁶ The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. ⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah (Ps 46:4-7)

- He directs all things for our good and for His glory.

Whatever trials have befallen me in my earthly pilgrimage, I have never had the trial of doubting that perhaps, after all, Jesus had made some mistake. No! my blessed Lord Jesus makes no mistakes! When we see all His meaning, we shall then understand what

now we can only trustfully believe that all is well—best for us, best for the cause most dear to us, best for the good of others and the glory of God. (John Paton, 19th c. missionary to New Hebrides)

Know that opposition will be fierce

- The olives trees and the lampstands signify the church's enduring, faithful witness.
 - The presence of “two” of each suggests reliability and truthfulness of the message.

Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. (Deuteronomy 19:15)

- We're not bringing judgment directly, but rejection of the gospel invites judgment surely.

And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” (Luke 2:34-35)

- Opposition to the gospel is not just an end-time phenomenon.

Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, (Matthew 10:21)

- The gospel is both inviting and abrasive.
- Know that faithfulness to Jesus & favor from the world may be mutually exclusive.

Know that faithfulness will be rewarded

- The 3 ½ days of death and shame plays off the 3 ½ years of suffering and persecution.
 - There will be opposition, maybe even deadly opposition.
 - But God is the God of the living, not the dead—resurrection is our present and our future.

I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. (Ezekiel 37:8-10)

- So...
 - Be confident in the Lord, knowing that He will vindicate you.
 - Be faithful to the Lamb, knowing that His church will endure.

I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)