

# REVELATION 10 AND 11

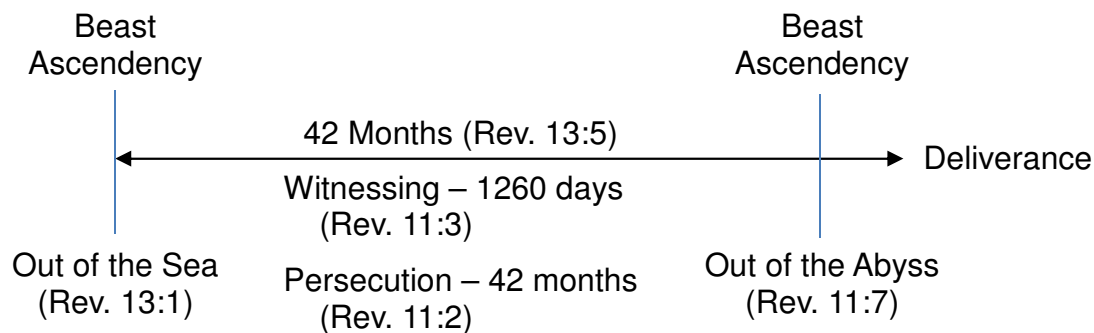
## (PART 5)

### DELIVERED FROM HATRED

#### (REVELATION 11:8-12)

We previously reviewed John’s vision of a “beast” that **ascended** from the abyss (11:7 – its place of confinement). It was seen as the apocalyptic antichrist, ready for his last efforts to quell the work of God’s people.

In Revelation 13 the same “creature” **ascends** out of the sea – washing up mire and dirt (evil) onto its shores from its troubled waters (world strife) (Isaiah 57:20-21). Satan was on those shores, waiting for this creature’s emergence (Revelation 13:1 – NIV). [Note: Revelation 13 precedes Revelation 11 in its “beast” imagery prophetic sequence.]



John noted that God’s witnesses were “killed” (Revelation 11:7; cf. Revelation 3:10).

- Many conclude that this must represent the martyrs of the fifth Seal (Revelation 6:9; cf. Luke 21:16-17).
- But if so – who would be translated (Revelation 7:13-14) if all of God’s witnesses were destroyed after they completed their task?
- Another view must be entertained.

That “death” portrays, by hyperbole, that God’s true church will seem defeated since it can no longer witness. It does symbolize a “universal silencing” of God’s church/people.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, a legal restraint has been globally made. However, the gospel has now gone to the whole world. The work is finished. The advent of Jesus is presently anticipated!

John’s narrative resumes:

***“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).***

<sup>1</sup> Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan – 1999), p. 590.

To **refuse burial of the dead** was a terrible insult in the ancient world (Genesis 40:19, I Samuel 17:43-47, II Kings 9:10, Psalm 79:2-3).

- “This emphasizes the universal scorn heaped upon the witnesses.”<sup>2</sup>

The “**Great City**” within Revelation is identified as Babylon (14:8, 16:19, 17:18) (a coalition of the false trinity). It is later epitomized as a harlot (apostate church) in Rome (Revelation 17:5, 9). It contrasts with the holy city (Revelation 11:2, 21; cf. Jeremiah 22:8), held forth in promise within John’s prophecy.

This “great city” symbol is spiritualized by John in a way that identifies it as a place of utter moral degradation.<sup>3</sup> The picture suggests that God’s people appear defeated by their enemies and are left helpless within the confines of their authority. Evil appears to have triumphed. Other “geographic” areas mentioned strengthen this apparent “victory.”

- **Egypt:** represents the wicked world, oppressing God’s people (Hosea 8:13, Joel 3:19) [Egypt is also a symbol for idolatry (Isaiah 19:1, Ezekiel 20:7) and a place of slavery (Exodus 2:23, 6:6; Deuteronomy 5:6, 6:12; Joshua 24:17; Judges 6:8; Nehemiah 9:17; Micah 6:4)].
- **Sodom:** symbolizes a wicked “city of fornication and open sin” (Genesis 18:16-19-20, Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9; Jeremiah 49:18; Amos 4:1; Zephaniah 2:9; Matthew 10:15, 11:23-24; Luke 10:12; Romans 9:29; II Peter 2:6-7).<sup>4</sup>

The whole evil world appears to have that holy **remnant of God** in its clutches.

“**Where our Lord was crucified**” – this seems problematic if interpreted literally. However, we are in the midst of a highly symbolic narrative.

- Though Jerusalem is geographically where Jesus died, spiritually it means *anywhere the gospel or His presence is silenced!*

The word “crucified” heightens the thought of that silencing, just as Calvary silenced Christ’s lips!

“Of all nations presented in Bible history, Egypt most boldly denied the existence of the living God and resisted His commands. No monarch ever ventured upon more open and highhanded rebellion against the authority of Heaven than did the king of Egypt. When the message was brought him by Moses, in the name of the Lord, Pharaoh proudly answered: ‘Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go.’ Exodus 5:2, A.R.V. **This is atheism**, and the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God and would manifest a **like spirit of unbelief and defiance**. ‘The great city’ is also compared, ‘spiritually,’ to Sodom. The corruption of Sodom in breaking the law of God was **especially manifested in**

<sup>2</sup> Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 426.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago), 1995, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Aune, David E.; *52B World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books, Dallas, Texas), 1997, p. 620.

**licentiousness.** And this sin was also to be a pre-eminent characteristic of the nation that should fulfill the specifications of this scripture.”<sup>5</sup>

The gruesome imagery of John’s prophecy continues:

**“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).**

The hostility, silencing, then humiliation of God’s witnesses is, contextually, an act of the antichrist beast (papacy – the Holy See) that had ascended out of the abyss.

- Its **enabling power** came from the dragon (Satan – 13:2) and is globally enforced by the earth beast – the United States (Revelation 13:14-16).
- Thus, the “dead bodies,” those witnesses, now inactive, are observed by “all the world” – “dwellers on the earth.”

The humiliation of God’s people is short, however – **three and a half “days.”**

- This is rhetorical, a metaphor that mocks the three and a half years that God’s people “witnessed” and were persecuted (cf. 11:2-3)! It reveals only a brief victory for the antichrist.<sup>6</sup>
- This “time period” that God’s people are open to the world’s ridicule parallels the 45 days of Jacob’s Trouble or “great tribulation” right at the end, which terminates with the deliverance of God’s people (Daniel 12)!

“As the members of the body of Christ approach **the period of their last conflict**, ‘the time of Jacob’s trouble,’ they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of his Spirit.”<sup>7</sup> “The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven.”<sup>8</sup> But they will be delivered.<sup>9</sup>

“‘These are they which came out of great tribulation;’ they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s judgments. But they have been delivered, for they have ‘washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’ ‘In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault’ before God. ‘Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.’ They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst. But ‘they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.’ Revelation 7:14-17.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 269 (emphasis added).

<sup>6</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 595.

<sup>7</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, May 27, 1862.

<sup>8</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Maranatha*, p. 199.

<sup>9</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 648.

***“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).***

This portrayal suggests that the “great city” now encompasses the whole world.<sup>11</sup>

The “**rejoicing**” and **exchanging of “gifts”** reveal that this **silencing** is a festive experience. There is mutual/global satisfaction that the “guilt-producing” messengers have ceased their appeals.

- The two witnesses are now called prophets (this echoes the “mission” given to John in 10:11).
- Their warnings had “**tormented**” the unrepentant world – they hated the conviction it brought.
- But they were unrepentant.<sup>12</sup>
- This “celebration” reveals the utter depravity and unquenchable enmity for truth and right.

It echoes similar experiences of:

- Elijah – a “troubler of Israel” (I Kings 18:17).
- Micah – does not prophesy “good” (I Kings 22:8, 18)
- Paul – Felix calls him “mad” (Acts 26:25)<sup>13</sup>

*“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mark 13:13).*

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy” (John 16:20).*

- The redemptive story will end with the destruction of the earth in which the unbelievers trusted (6:12-17, 21:1).
- God’s judgments will find them guilty (Acts 17:30-31, I Thessalonians 1:8-10).<sup>14</sup>

“The church, **soon to enter upon her most severe conflict**, will be the object most dear to God upon earth. The confederacy of evil will be stirred with power from beneath, and Satan will cast all the reproach possible upon the chosen ones whom he cannot deceive and delude with his satanic inventions and falsehoods. But exalted ‘to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins,’ will Christ, our representative and head, close His heart, or withdraw His hand, or falsify His promise? No; never, never.” “God has a chosen people ... it is His highest joy to have them with Him to be partakers of His glory.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Aune, *op. cit.* p. 621.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

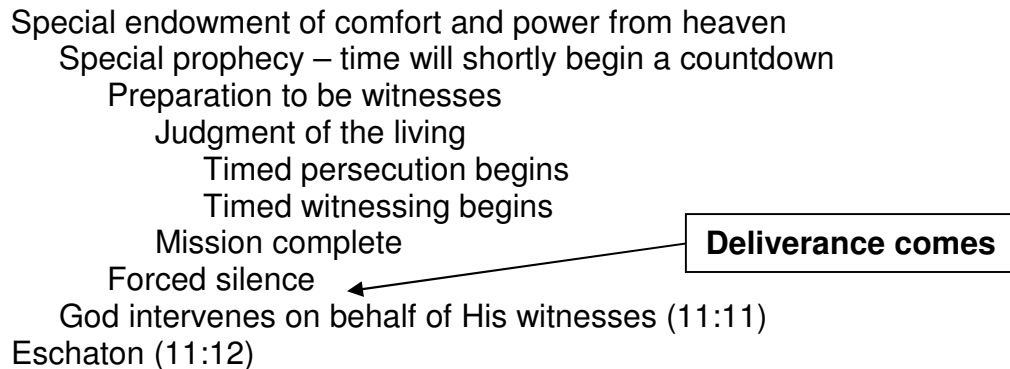
<sup>13</sup> Stefanovic, Ranko; *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 351.

<sup>14</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 596.

<sup>15</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 20-21.

**A significant transition now comes within this prophetic message** of Revelation 10 and 11.

This is the amazing sequence to be immersed in:



**“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).**

After the **three and a half days** (brief time – rhetorical, again, mocking the three and a half years of witnessing) the “breath of God” – life – enters these two witnesses.

- This echoes the dry bones of Ezekiel 37:5 and 9-10 coming alive.
- They are raised by the **“Spirit of life.”** Never again to be “inactive.”

The festive merry-making is now turned to **abject terror** for the wicked world.<sup>16</sup> This begins a painful reality that continues until they die!

- This parallels the time **when God’s people are delivered** (Daniel 12:1; cf. Exodus 15:16)! (An important waymark of end-time prophecy.)
- This is the time when God’s people will know that they are saved.
- It is the time when the wicked suddenly realize that they are lost – all hope is gone.

Though two witnesses are portrayed, they represent the community of believers.

- The wicked had cried, *“Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?”* (Revelation 13:4). *Where is your God?* (Psalm 79:10).
- God does not let such blasphemous questions reverberate long before He answers.

God soon vindicates His people and His name by destroying the oppressors (Revelation 20:7-10 – based on Ezekiel 38).<sup>17</sup>

*“Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD” (Ezekiel 38:23).*

<sup>16</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

<sup>17</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 597.

He stands on behalf of His people – all those found written in the Lamb’s book of life (cf. Exodus 32:32-33, Isaiah 4:3, Psalm 69:29).

- God’s people cannot be silenced again!
- This is when Michael stands for His people (Daniel 12:1) (chapter 12 is a key prophetic chapter).

*“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be **delivered**, every one that shall be found written in the book”* (Daniel 12:1).

This **deliverance** comes when the “eschatological antichrist king’s” (Daniel 11:36-45) oppression of God’s people comes to an end.

- A transition in Christ’s work occurs.
- This is also during the time of distress noted as “tribulation” (Matthew 24: 29-30, Mark 13:24-27, Luke 21:25-27).
- Its terminus brings Christ’s Second Advent/Coming.

A tribulation or “time of distress” occurs five other key times in the Old Testament (Isaiah 33:2; Jeremiah 14:8, 15:11, 30:7; Psalm 37:39; cf. Judges 10:14; Nehemiah 9:27; Matthew 24:21, 29-31). God is always the source of deliverance – as here in Revelation.<sup>18</sup>

“The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb’s book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon’s roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter’s devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. ‘A fair miter’ is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father’s name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. ‘These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God’ (Revelation 14:4, 5).”<sup>19</sup>

### **Something wonderful now happens:**

***“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).

The beast had “ascended” to administer his hate-filled mission. The saints now “ascend” as Jesus administers His final love-filled mission!

<sup>18</sup> Steinmann, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis), p. 559.

<sup>19</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 475.

The “loud voice” is undoubtedly that of God the Father (cf. 12:10, 16:17, 21:3), extending this beautiful invitation.

- Interestingly, John heard Jesus with a trumpet-like voice, inviting him to “Come up hither” into the throne room of heaven (Revelation 4:2-2; cf. 11:1). There he witnessed the onset of the final judicial phase of making up the citizens for heaven.
- **Here** he witnesses **that chosen “body”** (the two witnesses, symbolizing that purified church), being given the invitation to “Come up” or ascend into eternal reality!

Revelation 4:	The judgment process of the living begins.
Revelation 11:1:	The judgment process is finished.
Revelation 7:	The saints, the “144,000,” <b>who have been chosen</b> are undergoing a sealing process.
Revelation 11:12:	The two witnesses, representing the <b>purified body of the saved</b> , go to heaven.

“Come up hither” is an invitation to join with Jesus in the heavens at the eschaton.

- How can we tell?
- From the words: “They ascended up to heaven in a **cloud**.”
- “**cloud**” was the sign of the “Son of Man” coming at the *parousia* (Matthew 24:30).

A divine presence is marked by the reference to a “cloud symbol” (Exodus 13:21-22, 33:9-11, 34:5, I Kings 8:8-11).

- The highest commission ever given to man was to “prophesy again” (10:11). Fulfilling that task over a 1260-day period (11:3) was man’s last gospel outreach.
- The invitation to “Come” or “Come up” validates the completion of that prophetic ministry (Revelation 11:12).<sup>20</sup>

“And their enemies beheld them.” This “observation” of their enemies is intriguing. John seems to use this as another great rhetorical statement. They had rejoiced over the “dead bodies” of the saints. Now they observe the “living saints” being given salvation. As the wicked then see Jesus’ face, they cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on them to “hid them” – really, “kill them” (Revelation 6:16).

- 11:5: The power of the witnessing barred any enemy from curtailing their work.
- 11:7: The “beast” – symbolic of all the horrors of Christian apostasy – comes out of “hell” and silences them (but not until their task is completed).
- 11:12: The enemies observe those whom they silenced – being honored by heaven.

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<sup>20</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

“When the voice of God turns the captivity of His people, there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life....

“The wicked are filled with regret, not because of their sinful neglect of God and their fellow men, but because God has conquered. They lament that the result is what it is; but they do not repent of their wickedness. They would leave no means untried to conquer if they could.

“The world sees the very class whom they have mocked and derided, and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through pestilence, tempest, and earthquake. He who is to the transgressors of His law a devouring fire, is to His people a safe pavilion.

“The minister who has sacrificed truth to gain the favor of men now discerns the character and influence of his teachings. It is apparent that the omniscient eye was following him as he stood in the desk, as he walked the streets, as he mingled with men in the various scenes of life....

“Ministers and people see that they have not sustained the right relation to God. They see that they have rebelled against the Author of all just and righteous law....

“The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. ‘We are lost!’ they cry, ‘and you are the cause of our ruin;’ and they turn upon the false shepherds.”<sup>21</sup>

The ascent of God’s people will be “gradual enough” for the wicked to observe, understand and realize the magnitude of their loss and rebellion.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 654-656.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 97.