

Redemption Church of Bristol
Revelation 10-11 Worksheet

What's the key question Revelation 10-11 is asking?

- If Christ is Lord, how can Caesar get away with both killing Christians and gloating over it?
- What does God say to those who suffer for the cause of God?

A Note on Genre: It's tempting to assume that Revelation is allegory - the symbols are one-to-one matches for either an OT story, a first-century reality, or an end times scenario. In reality, John uses his symbols fluidly to establish patterns & types. They speak to how God works in a timeless & recurring manner. So...

Who are the Two Witnesses?

- V. 4 references Zech 4, which refers to the high priest Joshua and the governor Zerubbabel, who were charged with restoring Judah after the exile.
- Moses & Elijah - Vv 6-7 refer directly to ways in which Moses & Elijah resisted evil kings.
 - Moses & Elijah also represent the Law & the Prophets (see the Transfiguration), which more broadly means either the whole story of God or the whole people of God.
- 1st c. Church - Those killed by the beast and put on public display in a gloating celebration.
 - In 64 AD, Nero had Christians burned alive in his gardens during public banquets.
- Us - By establishing this pattern, the witnesses represent anyone who stands up for God.

What is The Great City?

- Rome - John is narrowly referring to Rome, but he uses other names to both call Rome out and to show that Rome is nothing new. Rome is a pattern and every generation will have a Rome.
- So The Great City is also:
 - Sodom - The emblematic city of wickedness and rebellion against God.
 - Egypt - The emblematic city of resistance to God and God's justice.
 - Babylon - The emblematic city of "Empire" and those who call themselves God.
 - 2020 America - In any way that we follow the patterns of The Great City.

How long will The Great City get away with this?

- For a time, it will appear that The Great City has won. But John promises this is temporary.
- He says the trial will last 3½ years (42 Months; 1260 Days; A time, times, half a time)
- This is a reference to Daniel, when the sacrifice was shut down. The number should be taken figuratively to represent the time of trial when it appears the enemies of God have won.

What will happen to those who persevere in their witness?

- Resurrection - God breathes life on those who have died and calls them to "Come up."
- Vindication - The witnesses are raised in front of the world who had previously mocked them.
- Oneness with Christ - The witnesses suffer, die, and are raised with the Lamb.
- Participation in the coming Kingdom of God. As John declares: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Reflection:

- In what ways has our culture become The Great City? Who are the Caesars of our day?
- Do we believe that God will redeem those who persevere in faith? Have we seen it?
- How are we being called to be God's faithful witnesses? How are we called to stand apart?