

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Persecution and Protection

Revelation 11:1-19

Main Idea: God will protect those who belong to Him.

God instructed John to consume the scroll and bear witness of the Gospel to the nations and rulers of the world. Now, God continues to involve John in the prophetic revelation of the end of the age of man. God instructs John to measure the temple, the altar, and the people. This is not measure for the sake of knowing the size (after all, God already knows as He is omniscient) but a means of dividing. Lines are drawn between those who worship the Lord and those who don't. Throughout the whole of this chapter, many times and numbers are given. It is very likely that these are not indicative of the literal time but rather as an indication of completeness and representing God. Furthermore, as John references the temple, it is the opinion of this author that this does not necessitate a physical rebuilding of the temple. The temple refers to the people of God and the true believers who find their identity in the body of Christ. In the Old Testament, the temple represented the place where the priests would intercede for mankind to God. Now, with the coming of Jesus Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit, we as the body of Christ represent the intercession of God to the world and identifying with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. In this chapter, you see the believers begin to feel the persecution of the world. For part of this, the people of God will be spared and for others, true believers will feel the unabated persecution. Throughout this chapter, though, we see that God does not abandon His people. No matter what the world does to those who believe, God will protect those who worship Him and belong in Jesus Christ.

The Protection of God

Two witnesses would stand outside proclaiming the name of the Lord and the witness of the Gospel to the world, facing ridicule and persecution for it. Yet, beyond that, in bearing witness to the One, True King of Heaven, the abilities of God become evident and apparent as they demonstrate an ability to enact miracles

reminiscent of what Moses performed to free the people from Egypt. For three and a half years they would proclaim the Gospel to the world as the outer courts to the temples are ravaged by the outside world. During this time, it seems that the people inside the inner courts are protected. Furthermore, the two witnesses fell under the protection of God, keeping the ability to reign down miracles and curses upon those who would cause them harm.

The church and all her members must continually rely on the strength and message of God rather than on our own. Our lives should display the power of God not the power of mankind. This comes from a life fully submitted to the will and purposes of God. For the two witnesses, they spoke from a lowly position but as ones who held the weight of God behind their message. They were not dressed in fancy or rich clothing, but the message of their testimony displayed the richness of God's grace and mercy. God received the glory from what the witnesses spoke and the people of God in the safety of the presence of God displayed that God's provision would run dry. When we face persecution and threats of death, we can do so with the understanding that the God we serve is all powerful. The protection of God extends into eternity. Death is no threat to the church who has put their hope fully in the power of Jesus Christ.

Understand that God protects the people becomes incredibly important when faced with the upcoming event. The people of God would be persecuted and some would lose their lives.

... Despite Persecution

At the end of the testimony of the two witnesses, the beast is released from the abyss and the two witnesses are killed. The beast makes war on the church and on her message ultimately appearing to be victorious. The idea that the bodies remain in Egypt and Sodom shows the nature of the beast. Few people who followed God lived in Sodom and instead the people sought after their own fleshly desires to gratify and satisfy their every need. Egypt, similarly, represented the oppression of the people of God under the rule of Pharaoh. Fleshly desires and oppression

will appear to reign victorious over the church as they lay siege to the Holy City and the world will mock the two dead prophets who represent the church. Just as all appears to be lost, the breath of God will re-enter their bodies and God will command them to return home. In almost an anti-climactic fashion, the two prophets will rise up and return to heaven.

There will come a time when it appears as if the message of the church and its influence in the world will appear dead. Even worse, the church will be mocked brutally throughout this time. In refusing to bury the two witnesses, the world exposed and ridiculed the church in the public sphere. For the Christian, our message must not waiver in the face of persecution. For some of the time, we will be protected from the effects of the persecution the world extends because of our faithfulness and commitment to God. Other times, because of that same faithfulness and commitment to God, we will be persecuted and even killed. During these times, the role of the church remains unchanging. We remain faithful in the message that God gives for us to speak to the world and trust in God to care for us. Death ultimately will not have a lasting effect on the believers as we serve a God who has conquered death. Death can do nothing to those who are in Christ and we should not fear its effects. Christ took the consequences of death upon Himself.

With this, the second woe is complete and the third is coming soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

As the seventh trumpet sounds its call, the elders surrounding the throne fall to their face and worship and the ark of the covenant is clearly seen from heaven. The result is the all too familiar roars of lightning and pearls of thunder. The Holiness of God and His wrath were being poured out on all creation. The invasion of Heaven into earth was coming soon. No matter the circumstances we face, whether persecution or safety, we can worship God for who He is and what He has already done in our lives. Our future is secured by the grace of Jesus Christ who intercedes on our behalf in the throne room of God. Justice will be given to the

world. For those who have died with Christ, the penalty of our sin has been paid. For those who cling to our own life, the payment is forthcoming and will be paid in full. As the heavens open to declare the glory of God, there is still time for all to repent and turn to Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

- In what ways does Jesus Christ serve as our High Priest and Intercessor? Where do we see these qualities in chapter 11?
- When have you experienced the protection of God?
- How does reliance on God serve as a testament to the power of saving Grace of Jesus Christ?
- Does your life display the power of God and reliance on Him or the striving of yourself?
- Why do you think God allows bad things to happen to the believers? What purpose does this reveal?
- How do we worship God in the good times? How do we worship God during the difficult times?



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