

Come Up Here

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 June 2026

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0:00] Let's turn again for a little to the chapter we read in Revelation chapter 11. I'm reading in verse 12. Revelation 11, verse 12.

Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, Come up here! And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. As we know, Revelation is a book of great mysteries, and James McKeew with this morning was preaching from it, and he highlighted just that very thing, that some of it is very, very hard for us to understand, and it's very easy to get bogged down in it, and begin to speculate, and begin to tie ourselves in knots.

But tonight I want us just very simply to look at these two witnesses that we have here, the reaction of the people to them, and of what God did with them, and the impact that it made upon all who watched and all who saw what was happening.

And so in this chapter we read of the ministry of these two witnesses, and it's quite interesting when we see in verse 4 where it says, these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands before the Lord of the earth.

And whenever you read that, it takes your mind to Zacharias' prophecy, because we have the very same kind of imagery there. And Zacharias, in his prophecy, was prophesying of how God was going to restore Israel from captivity, and that two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, who would be the two instruments in God's hand, in bringing the people back and rebuilding and restoring the temple and such like.

[1:55] So there is definitely some link to that here. But here we have these two witnesses, two men in this revelation that John's been given, and they are given 1,260 days to witness.

Roughly, about three and a half years, or a wee bit more, I'm not sure of the maths of that, but between three and four years they're able to witness.

And in that period they are untouchable. For three and a half plus years they're going to preach. They had an appointed time, and when their ministry was over, they were going to face martyrdom because of their love and their faith to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we know in this world that the very earth is red with the blood of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Year after year after year throughout this world, thousands have been killed for no other reason than that they love the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's that ongoing hatred to Christ, to his people, to his followers. Now it's interesting how the Lord often has his witnesses in twos.

[3:16] And we find himself, the Lord, remember when he sent out the disciples on mission, he sent them out in twos. And we often read in the New Testament of how in the early church they were in twos.

We find Peter and John. We find Paul and Silas. We find Paul and Barnabas. And the two is, I believe, very important. One is there to encourage the other, and I'm sure the other is there to compensate for what one gives, because different personalities, different styles, different ways. So there's a lot of method in that. Now, you'll notice that when the time of the witnesses comes to an end and the persecution against them is so severe that two particular nations are mentioned. It talks about their death, and verse 8, it tells us, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt.

And interestingly, these two names straight away will take to your own mind Sodom was a city of gross immorality. Egypt was a nation for its severe persecution of God's people, but also we know that at the time of the end of Genesis and into Exodus that Egypt was one of the foremost countries.

[4:48] It was a country of great wealth and of education, a country of materialism and paganism and worldliness. So in a sense, Sodom and Egypt stand for everything that this world is in its opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ, of all the immorality, the materialism, and all the power, and everything that is opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as we know, it's still the very same thing today. So here's this world that is fired up in enmity and opposition to the witnesses.

That are sent by God and enabled by God to proclaim the truth. Now, verses 8 and 9 are very interesting because you'll know that the witnesses, it tells us here about these witnesses.

That tells us, verse 7, and when they'd finished their testimony, that is, when the time that the Lord had appointed, 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 that great city. So they weren't even given the decency of a burial. They were just left their bodies to rot where they lay.

[6:08] That's what the people thought of them. They looked on them as just dirt, as refuse, as something to be, just leave them where they are. But what's fascinating is verse 9.

Now, people reading this at the time when John wrote it would say, how on earth is that possible? How can people from all the different languages in the world and all the different nations in the world and all the different tribes in the world, how can they all look for three and a half days on the bodies of these two witnesses?

Well, back then, it would be impossible. But you and I know today it is not impossible because we live in this world of satellite communication and internet and everything that happens from Japan to New York, from the Antarctic to the Arctic.

Everything is shown to everybody all over the world. There is this instant display of communication worldwide with all the technology that's available today.

[7:29] So, no difficulty for us to understand how we wouldn't be able to witness their bodies because there would be so many would be photographing and filming and showing what has happened.

So, all around the world, people would be seeing exactly what is happening. But tragically, we see here that there's actually rejoicing at the death of the witnesses.

There's this time of celebration because it tells us in verse 10, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry. Isn't that incredible?

And yet, that kind of opposition that these witnesses faced is the very same as happens today. There are so many people and people in places of influence and power, and their main aim is to eradicate the Christian faith.

We find it in the media, we find it in the political world, we find it in education, in all the places of influence. There are those, and they're determined to silence the voice of Christ.

[8:41] To eradicate Christian influence out of the public place. There's this idea, have your Christianity, but have it at home. Have it privately. Don't dare bring it into the public arena.

And so there's this determined push from so many. And it's just the very thing that we find here. See, the Lord is telling us exactly how it's going to be.

And you know this, if violence could be used against the church in our land today, most certainly it would. Thankfully, just now, we're protected. But there might come a day when violence will become part and partial of what the church in our land will experience.

But we find that the people are so happy and so full of joy that those witnesses are dead that we find it's quite extraordinary. That tells us in verse 10, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents because these two prophets who have been a torment to them.

Isn't that extraordinary? Somebody labeled this a satanic Christmas. They're so happy to see the witness of Christ done away with that they're exchanging presents and celebration.

[10:04] That's how awful the situation is. But you know, it changes in a second. In a moment, it all changes. And what happens next reminds me to a certain extent of when you go to Daniel in chapter 5 with Belshazzar.

Remember Belshazzar, the king? And he threw this massive party for a thousand of the lords. And it was a drunken orgy. And to add insult to injury, he had taken the golden vessels that had been brought from the capture of Jerusalem and they were using them to drink and call on the pagan

gods.

And at the height of that drunken orgy, all of a sudden, do you remember what happened? A man's hand appeared and began to write on the wall.

And instantly, there was total silence in that hall. And it tells us that Belshazzar, he was so shaken that his body began to quake.

His whole body began to shake with what he was seeing. Well, here's a similar moment. At the height of the party, at the height of the celebrations, at the height of rejoicing at the death of the witnesses, we find something extraordinary happening.

[11 : 25] that the two corpses that had been lying on the ground there for 84 hours, we could say, for three and a half days, all of a sudden come to life.

They stand up. And if you and I had been there, we couldn't believe, talk of not being able to believe what you're seeing. But this is exactly what is happening.

that God has brought these witnesses back to life. And it tells us great fear fell on them all.

Great fear, no wonder. And you know, evil, although there are times it appears to triumph. And you say there's no end to it.

It's just getting worse and it's getting worse. Its days are numbered already. evil will never ultimately triumph.

[12 : 25] There's always going to be an end to it. It's always ultimately of a temporary nature. And then we hear this voice of command to the witnesses, come up here.

And they went up to heaven in a cloud. Come up here. You know, that's a voice, we'll come back to that in a moment. That's a voice that every Christian soul hears at the moment of their death.

Come up here. Come up here. That's what happens. Every person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, at the moment of death, their soul is summoned into the presence of the Lord.

And the wonderful thing is that when God speaks a word, he gives power accompanying the word. See, that's a big difference between you and me and God.

At the very beginning when God said the creation, it tells us, God said, let there be light. And there was light. Now, if you and I went into a room in a total blackout, and we said, let there be light, we could will it and wish it and exercise all the positive thinking in the world, but we couldn't produce one spark.

[13 : 49] It would just remain black. But when God says a word, accompanying the word is the power to do exactly what he has said.

And that's the word, you see, for instance, when Peter walked on the water. Remember what Peter said on the boat, Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you. And Jesus just said, come.

And accompanying that word, come, was the power to do what is humanly impossible to do. And you know, in a sense, it's the same with every soul that is saved.

When you became a Christian, although theologically and such like, we might not be able to, but in a sense, it's what God says to every person when they come to faith, is come up here.

it's when the word of God comes in power into your heart, into your life, and is able to do what has never been able to be done before, bring you from darkness into light, from death to life.

[14 : 56] You can't save yourself. An elder can't save you. A minister can't save you. A member of the family can't save you. You can't save yourself. Or the ministers and elders and family members and they pray for you, witness to you, but they can't save you.

God alone is able to save. And we must always remember that, that it's God who saves. You see, we've got to be absolutely convinced of this because sometimes we think, oh, it's just a matter that I know that I've got to believe.

And some people think it's an area of just, what we might say, positive thinking and being able to say in our heart, I believe. Salvation is a gift.

God is the giver. And we go to God and say to him, Lord, I need to be saved. I want to be saved. But I can't get from here to there unless you will save me.

That's what we need to do. we need to be absolutely, we do the asking. That's imperative. Seek and you will find. Our seeking is saying, Lord, save me.

[16 : 17] Reach down. Pull me to yourself. Come up here. May I hear these words. May these words of life come into my soul. And help me to know that I've passed from death to life.

And he will, guaranteed. We've got to remember that we can't save our selves. It's God who saves. But as we said earlier, this voice come up here is the voice that takes place at the moment of death.

You see, our soul, when we die, couldn't be transported on its own to glory. That's an impossibility. At death, God is enabling. God is controlling. God is over the whole situation. As we were originally made, death, as we know, wasn't part of the equation.

When God said in the garden, over everything, it is good. Death was not there. There was no death. [17:25] death. And it wasn't until Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. Remember what God said, in the day you eat of this fruit, you shall surely die.

death. And the day they ate, the sentence of death began. And death has followed ever since. It is the great enemy, the great intrusion, the great thing that we hate, we recoil from.

And it's a portal that we all have to pass through unless Christ returns first. And who knows? He may return before some of us pass. We don't know.

It's the enemy that we all recoil from. The greatest instinct we have is self-preservation. But there's going to come a day when we have to give way.

And many Christians, as we know, some Christians have the most amazing deaths and the most wonderful peace, but not every Christian. Some Christians have suffered, maybe through the illness, through different things.

[18:36] And they've suffered terribly as they've gone down into death's dark veil. And many a living hand has tended to them, and many a living arm has supported them. But we've got to remember that underneath, there's a more powerful hand and a more powerful arm, because the Lord is with his people at death.

And as death approaches, I believe that the ministering spirits of God, the angels, are present. remember what Jesus said in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, that when Lazarus died, that his soul was carried by the angels into glory.

I believe that that's what will happen, because the Lord is going to give this command, come up here, and the soul will be transported to glory.

a voice that no person around the bed, or no person in the room, or no person anywhere is conscious of, but that voice of command, with the power and the authority, will carry that soul into glory, into the presence of the Lord.

And Jesus, of course, is longing for that moment. We've always got to remember part of the high priestly prayer was, Father, I will, that they also whom you have given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.

[20:01] Jesus is longing for the day when every single Christian is going to arrive into glory. So the arrival of a Christian into glory is a wonderful thing in glory.

Jesus is involved. Remember the picture that's given to us when Stephen was being stoned. And as he was about to be martyred, he says, Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

And some people have suggested that Jesus was standing in order to welcome Stephen home. That's a suggestion. But we know that there will be a real welcome.

Enter into the joy of the Lord. So what a transformation will take place in the twinkling of an eye. All the suffering, all the pain, all the discomfort, all that this person is going through will change in a moment.

In the twinkling of an eye, taken out of this world and transported straight into all the glory and the wonder and the joy and the beauty, the everlasting domain of the redeemed.

[21:17] And of course we here on earth mourn, those who have passed from us. We all know the stillness of death, the quietness, how we miss those who are near and dear to us.

And it can be even a test to faith. I remember reading Robert Finlayson who had been a minister, he was certainly a minister in Lochs and I think he was a minister in Point way, way back.

and he lost, when he was in Lochs, he lost two sons in a drowning tragedy. And somebody said to him, oh minister, this is hard for you, it's hard on flesh and blood.

Oh yes, he said, and it's hard on grace itself. And that's true. Not only is it hard on the very flesh and blood, but in all the grace that God gives in a situation like that, it's still hard.

And so it's inevitable that on this side we miss. But if we could see the glory that our Christian loved ones have entered into, it would so temper our mourning.

[22:29] And you know, all this that happens here, the picture that we're given of the celebration of the wicked turning into their hearts, turning to ice, at this picture of God's people rising up into the air, is a picture of what's going to happen at the end of the return of Christ.

Because it tells us in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, we have a wonderful picture there given to us of the return of Jesus. Jesus. And it tells us there as Christ descends from heaven that the Lord will give a mighty shout.

There will be the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. And with this shout an extraordinary thing will occur. The graves will open and the graves will give up all their dead. And their bodies will be reunited with their soul. You know, interesting, it tells us that the redeemed, those who have gone, will be with the Lord in the air.

Our souls will be at that moment joining. It's an extraordinary picture. That the redeemed are returning with the Lord.

[23 : 49] and the bodies at that moment of shout when the graves will open and the dead bodies will rise up, that we'll be reunited with the Lord, with our bodies in the air to be with the Lord forever.

And after that occurs then those who are still alive of the Lord. If you're still alive when the Lord comes as a believer, you will then be caught up.

You won't go through death, but you will be caught up at that irresistible voice and power, come up here. And we see that it tells us here, then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying, come up here, and they went up to heaven in a cloud.

There's always a cloud. A cloud is symbolizing the presence and glory of God. You'll read of the manifestations of God's presence so often in the Bible, always a cloud.

Well, here they go, they go up in the cloud. But for those who don't love the Lord, this is the most frightening moment.

[24 : 59] You know this, I hate to think of how it'll be, the realization that everything that they held to was wrong, that they got it all wrong, and now it's too late to do anything about it.

but that's how it's going to be for some people. It tells us that very clearly in the word. Discovering that the gospel that you mocked is real, that the return of Christ that you ignored is real, that the hell that you might have laughed at is real, and now it's too late to do anything about it, because the path that you have chosen is finally set.

It's a solemn, solemn thought. But you know, tonight the wonderful thing is that we are still on mercy's ground, and the invitation of the gospel is still here.

The voice of Jesus is saying, come up here in the sense that he's calling each and everyone who is still outside Christ. Tonight, tonight, if you hear my voice, do not harden your heart.

That's what it says. And you know, if you come to faith and rest your soul in Jesus, the words of Scripture will be so true for you that it will be better on the day of your death than it will be on the day of your birth.

[26 : 36] Let's pray. Lord our God, we thank you for your word, for the reality of it, the solemnity of it, the glory of it. And we pray that your word will go down deep into our souls, transforming them.

Nothing else will. It's by your word we're saved. It's by your word we're sanctified. Everything is through your word. And so we pray that your word will have the main place in our life, that we will live on it and die in it.

We pray to bless us then and part us tonight with your blessing. Grant us your grace and do us good and cleanse us, we pray, from our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it.

Amen. We're going to conclude our service singing in Psalm number 16. This is from Sing Psalms, Psalm number 16.

And we're going to sing the last four stanzas, verses 8 to the end, Psalm 16. from verse 8, which is on page 17.

[27 : 48] Before me constantly I set the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown. Therefore my heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing, my body too will rest secure in hope unwavering.

for you will not allow my soul and death to stay, nor will you leave your holy one to see the tombs decay. You have made known to me the path of life divine.

Bliss shall I know at your right hand, joy from your face will shine. verses 8 to the end, Psalm 16.

Before me constantly I set the Lord alone.

Amen. Amen. to the heart and be overthrown.

heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing, my heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing, my heart will be done.

[29:15] My heart will done. My heart body too will rest secure in hope and living for you will not allow my soul in captivity.

to stay down where you need your holy one to see the tom decay you have made known to me the
path of life divine will shine you and you will shine and you will you and you will you and you will
shine you may the and peace of the Father the Father

[illegible]