

REFUSE TO BE SILENT

Part 2 of Understanding the Times. Revelation 10:1-11:14.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. May 14, 2023.

JUST SHUT UP

Have we ever felt more pressure to shut up than in recent days?

- It's read, but it's not new.

Revelation 10-11 were written to remind first-century Christians

- Keep on speaking up for God and the Gospel.

SPEAK FOR GOD - REVELATION 10

The mighty angel speaks for God.

Revelation 10:1-3 (ESV) Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, 3 and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded.

The mighty angel's message is: Time is short.

Revelation 10:4-7 (ESV) And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." 5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven 6 and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, 7 but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

The mighty angel's reminder to John: Speak for God.

Revelation 10:8-11 (ESV) Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." 9 So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." 10 And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. 11 And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.

SHARE THE GOSPEL - REVELATION 11

We can expect spiritual protection, and physical persecution.

Revelation 11:1-2 (ESV) Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

- The temple of God is a symbol for the church. "Measure" is a symbol for spiritual protection.
- The holy city is a symbol for the church. "Trample" stands for persecution.
- 312 million Christians worldwide face very high or extreme levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. 1 in 7 Christians are persecuted worldwide. 1 in 5 Christians in Africa are persecuted, 2 in 5 Christians in Asia are persecuted. Worldwide, in 2022, 5,621 Christians were murdered - 90% of those were in Nigeria.(<https://www.opendoorsus.org/en-US/persecution/persecution-trends/>).
- Forty-two months symbolizes a limited time that is controlled by God.

We can expect to share God and the Gospel at great cost, great reward.

Revelation 11:3 (ESV) And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.

- The two witnesses represent faithful, testifying Christians.
- Christians who testify for Christ will suffer and die.

Revelation 11:7 (ESV) And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them ...

- BUT ... God will raise his people from the dead.

Revelation 11:11-12 (ESV) But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 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.

REFUSE TO BE SILENT

We're on earth for a reason.

- We are a prophetic and Gospel people who share our faith in Jesus Christ.
- The time is short and our work is urgent.

As a church, we will continue to support our local and global partners.

As individuals, small groups, and outreach teams, we will ...

- Commit to testify (start with prayer).
- Work with a partner or team for mutual support.
- Get creative. What can we use to make connections?
- Be bold and courageous (Revelation 13:9-10; Matthew 5:11-12).

CORNERSTONE GROUPS - TALK IT OVER

Pick one or more of these questions to discuss this week.

Review Sunday's teaching on Revelation 10-11.

- Review Sunday's study guide or watch Peter's teaching on YouTube.
- What part of the teaching most impacted your thinking?
- Summarize the main ideas in your own words.

Prayerfully apply the insights of the teaching.

- Discuss Peter's statement: "God did not put us here for an easy life, but to testify for Jesus." What do you think?
- Do you feel pressure to be silent? What kind of pressure is it - legal, workplace, social, awkwardness, religious, internal?
- Read Acts 4:1-22, and discuss its implications for our Gospel witness.
- What can we do to expand - individually, or as a small group, or as a church - our witness to Christ and the Gospel?

Pray together. Be bold.

Heavenly Father, thank you for saving us through faith in your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Someone shared the Gospel with us, and we believed. These days, there is pressure on us to shut up about Jesus. Life would be easier if we kept it to ourselves, but we know we're called to testify. Give us grace to be faithful and bold. Open doors of opportunity. Help us to speak up. We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen!

Preparation for Next Sunday

- Read Blessed, pages 139-142.
- Explore the Word One to One strategy at www.theword121.com/