

Revelation 11:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The phrase 'peoples and kindreds and tongues and nations' emphasizes the universal scope of witnessing their deaths. The refusal to allow burial adds insult and dishonor, treating the witnesses as criminals unworthy of basic human dignity. This public spectacle demonstrates the world's hatred of God's testimony. The three-and-a-half-day period parallels Christ's time in the tomb, foreshadowing resurrection. Reformed theology sees martyrdom as seed of the church; apparent defeat precedes vindication. The world's celebration proves temporary, while witnesses' victory is eternal.

Historical Context

Denying burial was severe dishonor in ancient cultures, reserved for criminals and enemies. Public display of corpses demonstrated complete victory over opponents. The universal observation ('peoples and kindreds') became literally possible through modern communications. This vision predicted global awareness of the church's apparent defeat before resurrection vindication.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that the church's apparent defeat is temporary encourage perseverance in faithful witness?
2. What does the world's celebration over dead witnesses reveal about natural humanity's attitude toward God's truth?

Interlinear Text

καὶ βλέψουσιν ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ φυλῶν καὶ
And shall see of the people And kindreds And
G2532 G991 G1537 G2992 G2532 G5443 G2532

γλωσσῶν καὶ ἔθνῶν τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν ἡμέρας τρεῖς
tongues And nations G3588 dead bodies their days three
G1100 G2532 G1484 G4430 G846 G2250 G5140

καὶ ἥμισυ καὶ τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀφήσουσιν
And an half And G3588 dead bodies their not shall
G2532 G2255 G2532 G4430 G846 G3756 G863

τεθῆναι εἰς μνῆματα
to be put in graves
G5087 G1519 G3418

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 17:15 (Parallel theme): And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Revelation 11:11 (Parallel theme): 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 10:11 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

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