

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	G3588	the people	And	kindreds	And
G2532	G991	G1537		G2992	G2532	G5443	G2532
γλωσσῶν	καὶ	ἐθνῶν	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	μνημεῖα					
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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