

Week of January 13-19

## **MIND YOUR P'S & Q'S**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Revelation Chapter 11

As a child, you may have heard the phrase, “Mind your p’s and q’s!” The saying gets used by parents as a way to remind children to watch their manners. I want to use the phrase to help you understand some of the main themes of today’s chapter reading.

For many readers of Revelation, chapter 11 contains some of the most difficult material in the book. Much of the struggle has to do with how to interpret John’s visions. Is he describing a literal city and two actual prophets or is he using symbols to speak of the faithful? In this short devotional, we can’t explore these possibilities in depth but I would encourage you to step back and instead focus on a few definite “p’s and q’s” that we see in this chapter.

- 1) **Protection** – God protects the faithful worshippers (11:1-2, 5). The inner court of the temple is safe and fire comes out of the prophets’ mouths to devour any who try to harm them.
- 2) **Prophecy** – Just as John was called to prophesy at the end of chapter 10 after he ate the sweet and sour scroll, so also the two witnesses are called to prophetic witness through the power of the Holy Spirit (11:3-6). Nothing can harm them until their witness is complete (11:5).
- 3) **Persecution** – The city and outer courts are trampled by the Gentiles and the two witnesses are put to death by the beast.
- 4) **Promise** – The two witnesses died at the hand of the beast but they did not stay dead. They were raised to life and caught up to heaven. The beast won the battle but the faithful won the war. Revelation 20-22 is all about the promise to those who overcome.
- 5) **Question** – In light of the above p’s why do you think God revealed the two opening visions in chapter 11 to John? Hint: Think of what the church was going through at the hands of Domitian. Still stumped? Take a look at a second “q”.
- 6) **Quest** – John’s words were for the 1<sup>st</sup> century church to encourage them to be faithful to Christ and their proclamation of the gospel. His words still ring with authority for us too in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), we too have been sent on a quest by Jesus to share the good news of the gospel. We have been promised success. This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14). We are assured of safety in Christ’s hands (John 10:28) even if we suffer persecution and ultimately lose our lives for the sake of the gospel as did many martyrs, including the apostles, in the early church. Ultimately, though, we win since the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church and when Christ returns, we will be caught up to meet him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Have some fun and research the origins of the phrase “Mind your p’s and q’s.” You might be surprised as to the theories proposed for its origin. Pray for God’s empowering to be faithful to Christ and the gospel’s proclamation.

**Take-a-way:** *It always pays to mind God’s p’s and q’s!*