

A Billion People Watched

Commentary for October 23, 2010 — The Chilean Miners Rescued

The wonderful news of the rescue of 33 miners in Chile between October 13 and 14 was watched by an estimated one billion people.¹ This means that one out of every six people on the planet watched some portion of this uniquely human experience. The event was watched as it happened, with all the live drama and joy of a seeming “physical” return from certain death of the rescued miners. Some likened the rescue to a type of resurrection.

Not only did a billion people watch this event take place over 2 days (and for weeks leading up to the rescue), but they also saw live video inside the mine cavity where the miners were trapped. Video feed cable was put down a small supply tube drilled earlier. People around the world could watch each miner enter the claustrophobic small diameter rescue capsule and then wait as it went vertically through ½ mile of rock. Minutes later they saw him exit the capsule to the cheers, hugs, and shouts of joy of the rescued and the rescuers. The procedure was flawless. Not since the 1969 moon landing had so many people watched one event.

This wonderful rescue brings into focus an account of a future event in the Book of Revelation. Then also billions of people will watch a worldwide event. Never before has the world had the ability to watch live events, worldwide, in real time, moment to moment, with such ease. Now such events can be watched with personal communication devices.

An Intriguing Biblical Event in the Future

This technological trend will continue to the point that most people in the world will be able to watch live television feeds transmitted by satellite anywhere in the world. An important world-wide biblical event in the future will involve the two witnesses in Revelation chapter 11. Read it in context:

“And I will be endowing My two witnesses and they will be prophesying a thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.’ These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth.”²

And if anyone is wanting to injure them, fire is issuing out of their mouth and is devouring their enemies. And if anyone should be wanting to injure them, thus must he be killed. These have authority to lock heaven, that there may be no shower of rain for the days of their prophecy. And they have authority over the waters to be turning them into blood, and to smite the land with every calamity, as often as they will.

And whenever they should be finishing their testimony, the wild beast which is ascending out of the submerged chaos will be doing battle with them and will be conquering them and killing them.

¹ See [“Chile: A Lesson in Courage, Faith and Patriotism for the Entire World.”](#)

² This passage in Revelation gives more information and identifies who are the lamps and olive trees first mentioned by Zechariah in the fifth vision of Zechariah chapter 4.

And their corpses will be at the square of the great city which, spiritually, is being called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord, also, was crucified.³ And those out of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations are observing their corpses three days and a half, and they are not letting their corpses be placed into a tomb. And those dwelling on the earth are rejoicing over them and are making merry, and will be sending approach presents to one another, seeing that these two prophets torment those dwelling on the earth.

And after the three days and a half the spirit of life out of God entered into them, and they stand on their feet. And great fear falls on those beholding them. And they hear a loud voice out of heaven saying to them, 'Ascend here!' And they ascended into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies behold them."

• Revelation 11:3–12, Concordant Version

These "two witnesses" will give prophecies and perform acts that will be miraculous as we read them today. Their testimony, prophecies, actions (such as withholding rain), and fire **"issuing out of their mouth"** (whatever that means, their enemies die) cause them to be hated and feared. **"These two prophets torment those dwelling on the earth."**

The world will observe them, hate them, and rejoice when, after a fierce fight (which perhaps may be viewed also), **"the wild beast"** kills them. Perversely, the world continues to rejoice and be reassured at the presence of their dead bodies.

Why should the world watch the dead? Probably because they prophesied about their resurrection, and proclaimed the very verses in the Book of Revelation you read above as coming to pass soon before their eyes. The world will watch with rapt attention and anticipation to see if they would come back to life.

This passage does not say that everyone on earth will view their bodies. Indeed, **"those out of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations"** may differ from **"those dwelling on the earth."** The first group may indicate those in the immediate Jerusalem area, while **"those dwelling on the earth"** are people everywhere who closely monitor what takes place in Jerusalem. I personally believe the two phrases describe the same people.

Whatever the case, until just recently it has not been possible for a billion or more people to continually view a single event lasting several days. Again, I want to point out that, as the decades leading up to Christ's second coming go by, technology will continue to advance to make it easier for people to follow such events on personal and hand-held electronic devices.

The raising to physical life of the two witnesses will occur and it will shock the world. Their ascension, I believe, will occur at the same time that Christ returns. This will initiate the Lord's Day of judgment upon the earth. You and I will join the two witnesses in resurrection to greet Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). **"Comfort one another with these words"** (verse 18).

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³ The location of this event will be on the Mount of Olives, where Christ was crucified, near the Miphkad altar and the red heifer's ashes. See Dr. Martin's book [Secrets of Golgotha](#), 2nd edition.