

Revelation 11: 11-14; "The Breath of Life from God", Sermon # 83 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 9th, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In Chapters 11 and 12 of this book we find John eating "a little book" which was sweet as honey in his mouth and afterwards "bitter to his stomach." We found that John was instructed to "prophecy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings." We found him being given a reed like a measuring rod and instructions to "rise and measure the temple of God." The New Testament letters of Paul make it evident that we, the Church of Jesus Christ, are the spiritual temple of God. We that believe in the gospel, and we who would be governed by the truth of the Bible, seeing it as God's Holy Word, want more than anything to be able to worship God in spirit and truth. The Church is "the pillar and support of the truth, as it says in 1 Timothy 3: 15. Paul says there, "But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The true Church is composed of those faithful "inner court" worshippers of God who want to glorify God through a pure worship. Christ's Church, through the many deceptions of Satan, is subject to being spiritually defiled during these 2nd and 3rd time periods of Church History that we have been studying, by those who would call themselves Christians; those who would add to the Pure Word of God and climb up into positions of authority in the visible Church, positions which have never been commanded by God or ordained by our Lord Jesus Christ. This has resulted in great hindrances and great oppositions being made to the forward progress of the Church in regard to her mission to "preach the gospel to every creature", and her commission to "make disciples of all the nations." God has something to say about what He will do in response to this defilement. His response is mentioned in such verses as 1 Corinthians 3: 17 which says, "If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him." "For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." And there is not only this response on God's part, but He also gives a command to all true Christians as well. In 2 Corinthians 6: 16, God says, "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?" "For you are the temple of the living God." "As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them.'" "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord." The Lord our God is a God who does not want the Church of His Beloved Son to be defiled with false doctrine and false worship. But we have seen how during the 2nd time period of Church History, from 323 - 756 A.D. that the 1st 6 trumpets made their successive announcements of many different errors of doctrine creeping in, which culminated in the three "woes" of Chapter 8, verse 13. "And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound.'" This afternoon I want to speak to you in terms of a Review and a Resurrection. I want to review with you

where we have been in regard to the slaying of the Witnesses, and then 2ndly I want to show you the preview of a spiritual Resurrection of great proportions.

1st- A Review -

I have explained to you in past sermons that the 5th Trumpet was the announcement of the rise of the Papal system of false doctrine and false authority in the Western part of the fallen Roman Empire. This was the first woe. I have explained the 6th Trumpet as being the announcement of the rise of the Mohammedan power in the Eastern part of the fallen Roman Empire. This is the second woe. These systematic oppositions to Christ's kingdom rose separate from one another as two separate woes to the Church of Jesus Christ. They rose as Antichristian powers in the latter part of the second time period of Church History; from 606 A.D. to 756 A.D. They were both established as systematic oppositions to the true Church of Jesus Christ by 756 A.D. But when we come to this 3rd time period of the 1260 days, or years, we find that even though they are not joined together formally in allegiance, (In many ways they are opposed to one another, and even enemies of one another), yet they are both systems which are being controlled and initiated by Satan himself in opposition to Christ's kingdom, the one from within the visible Church and the other from outside the Christian Church. It says in Luke 23: 12, in relation to agreeing about what should be done with our Lord, it says that "on that very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other. Those who were formerly enemies became friends. This is how it may come to be with these systems of opposition before they are defeated. It is in the totality of their systematic oppositions; the Papal system from the inside, and the Mohammedan system from outside of the Church, that they form the Antichristian powers. Together they compose the 3rd and final woe, mentioned in verse 14 of Chapter 11.

We have further seen, that during this whole time period of the 1260 years that the true Church has been prophesying; that is, that she has been preaching and praying in relation to the forward progress of the truth of the gospel and the truth of the Bible. These 2 Witnesses represent Church teaching and Church government. And these Witnesses have made some substantial progress with the truth among the many nations of the World over the 1260 years, and yet the cause has not yet triumphed among the nations so that the Church could in any sense of the word be said to be reigning on the earth. The Word of God and prayers of the ministers and people of the true Church have been a "fire in their mouths" toward their Antichristian enemies. They have done what God would have them to do to defend the truth in many cases, and over many generations. True ministers and believers have preached and they have prayed, but at the end of the 1260 years, they are overcome by the beast and killed, and their dead bodies lie in the streets of the city for 3 and a half days. This is a short prophetic time period of 3 and a half years where the Witness of the true Church of Jesus Christ will be considered in a public sense as dead, where it will appear that the cause of Christ and His gospel and His truth will have lost the battle for truth; that it has been killed. The Antichristian

forces will rejoice over the slain Witness of the true Church and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is called Sodom and Egypt and the city in which our Lord was crucified. This is the mystical city- Rome in the spiritual sense of being a False Babylon; the city which claims to be the New Jerusalem but which is really a harlot riding a beast, which will be more fully revealed in the coming chapters. Her false influence shall be felt throughout the world in the days that the Witnesses are slain.

This is where we left things last week; with the Church's witness having been slain by the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit. There is nothing more depressing or discouraging for the true Christian to think about than this; the prospect that what Christ has died to see come about, should itself die. Can this possibly be right? Could God actually permit this, or ordain this, that the Antichristian powers should be able to triumph over the kingdom of His Son? God forbid! But that it should be so for a little while; I believe that this is what this passage talks about. Was it not true that our Lord Jesus had to go to the cross and die to secure our salvation on the cross? Was it not true that his ministry was for 3 and a half years and then came His time of sufferings? Did not all appear to be lost, in the minds of the disciples, at that point? Did they not all forsake Him and flee away for a time? Was it not the case that He lay in the tomb dead for 3 days and 3 nights? Yes, it most definitely was the case. And yet at the end of the 3 and half days, did He not rise again, even as He said that He would? And His Church became His Witnesses. And so...even as Christ is in this world, even so is His Church. (1 John 4: 17)

2ndly, this afternoon, I want to speak to you about Resurrection.

(Verses 11 and 12)

"Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them." "And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.'" "And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them." The breath of God is that which gives life to the body. It is the breath of life, through the working of the resurrection power of Jesus Christ, by means of His Holy Spirit, that will come to raise the slain Witnesses at this critical time when all will seem to have been lost. Turn with me to Ezekiel Chapter 37. I think that is right to link our verse in Revelation 11: 11 with this passage in Ezekiel 37 because of the use of the words, "the breath of life." Let me read you this passage. "The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones." "Then he caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry." "and He said to me, 'son of man, can these bones live?'" "So I answered, 'O Lord God, You know.'" "Again He said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!'" "Thus says the Lord God to these bones: 'Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.'" "I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live." "Then you shall

know that I am the Lord." "So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone." "Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them." "Also He said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophesy son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus say the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'" "So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army." "Then He said to me, 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.'" "They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!'" "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.'" "Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up from your graves." "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place in your own land." "Then you shall know that I, the Lord have spoken it and performed it., says the Lord."

In this passage in Ezekiel 37, Ezekiel is prophesying to them about their return from captivity in Babylon. God would bring them back from this captivity, which they have thought of as a grave and a death like state for their nation and people. They were a people who had lost hope and thought of themselves as cut off from the mercies and blessings of God. But God, even as in Zechariah 4, is saying to them here that He would come sovereignly to them and raise them up to return from Babylon and rebuild the temple by the power of His mighty Spirit working with them and in them. But all of this is a great and glorious type of what the Jews will be thinking just before they come to saving faith in Jesus Christ in New Testament times. There is a much greater application which will come to pass sometime here in the future. There is a New Testament Babylon which is the beast which ascends from the bottomless pit. These Jews, living at the end of this; our time period of the 1260 days prophecy, are about to come to know and experience the gift of eternal life being given to them, even though they have rejected their Messiah for so many years, through so many generations, and have continued in this unbelief ever since, even up until this day. But we as the predominately Gentile New Testament Church are those who have inherited, in Jesus Christ, all of the promises which relate to His Church, which come to us based upon the prophecies given to the Jews originally. They rejected them, but we believed them. We are the true Israel of God. But they are the root of the olive tree, as Paul explains it in Romans 11: 17, and we Gentiles are the branches. They were broken off for their unbelief he says, and "we a wild olive tree were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree." He says in verse 23, "And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again." So we know, or we should know, that when the Jews are converted to Jesus Christ that they will become a part of His Church, and not remain a separate and distinct entity and people, apart from the Church. They will be grafted back into their own tree. Jesus

Christ died to break down the barrier between Jew and Gentile and to make them one new man. When Jews are converted now, and when they have been converted in the past, they have been only a remnant. But in the day of their spiritual resurrection, they will be raised as a whole nation of people who will come to know Jesus Christ. "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."(Romans 11: 26) They will then be brought into His Church and the timing of this will come in connection with the Resurrection of the 2 Witnesses which we are studying in Revelation 11. Their being converted and becoming a part of the Church will take a very great work of spiritual Resurrection. But it shall come to pass and many in physical Israel will become a part of the Israel of God and thus be the ones leading the way back, to the Church becoming a powerful Witness with the gospel and with the whole Bible now being believed by the Jews and Gentiles who compose the true Church. And the 2 Witnesses of Church teaching and Church government will be raised from the dead by this conjoined mighty work. There will be a work done with the nation of Israel and there will also be a work with the predominately Gentile Church of Jesus Christ to raise them up as well, bringing them new life from the dead. These things will take place in the same time period and are linked to each other. This is what is being pictured here.

Now notice several things with me about this text. It is not talking about a literal physical resurrection, even though it might appear to be so because of the description of the flesh coming back upon the bones of those being raised. It is speaking rather of the Jews coming back into their own land, becoming their own physical nation and having this great work of conversion and salvation come to them. The emphasis is upon the breath. The bones come rattling together, but this does not bring them life. The sinews and flesh come upon them, but still there is no breath in them, it says in verse 8. Ezekiel is told to prophesy to the breath and say, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on "these slain, that they may live." No actual physical resurrection came to pass when the Jews were released from their captivity and went back to rebuild the temple. But the cause for which all those who were slain before, lived for; that cause went on to completion in conjunction with the Spirit of God's working. Even so, in this New Testament time at the end of the 1260 days prophecy, after the 2 Witnesses are slain and for 3 and a half years Christ's cause seems to have been defeated, "the breath of life from God will enter them and they will stand on their feet..." These are not literal physical feet. This is their standing up to prophesy again and this time prevail. This is almost identical language to that of verse 10 of Ezekiel 37. "So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army." They will indeed be a great army, and the witnesses who were slain will indeed live. This is indeed something to look forward to in the History of the Church; the conversion of the Jews and their being brought in to the true temple of God, the Church of Jesus Christ. All their enemies, its says in verse 12, will "see them."

Now remember, this is a spiritual resurrection; it is not the literal physical resurrection of the dead that will come at the end of the age when the Lord Jesus returns. The 2 Witnesses will "ascend to heaven in a cloud", verse 12 says. This is not the picture of the Rapture of the Church. It is the picture of the Church being raised up to a higher position; ascending, even as Christ did, to rule spiritually over all the earth. But in this case it is a spiritual ascension of the Church. The "heaven" of all Christians, martyrs and otherwise, is to see Christ's cause and kingdom triumph, for the gospel to come to multiplied millions of people, and I think that we have great reason to expect that it shall be so in the later days of this present Church age. I personally link this resurrection in Revelation 11 with the "first resurrection" of Revelation 20. "And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished." "This is the first resurrection." It is the resurrection of the Church's Witness; it is her spiritual resurrection in order that she might triumph and reign upon the earth in terms of truth and righteousness and Christ's gospel prevailing over the darkness of everything that Satan can bring against her. Oh, may Christ's church have greater faith to believe that He can and will do these great things; perhaps even begin them in our own generation.