

THE TWO WITNESSES, REVELATION 11:3-6

Let's turn in our Bibles please to the book of Revelation, chapter 11. We're going to read together verses 1 through 14 of Revelation chapter 11, though the focus of our study today is going to be on verses 3 to 6. Revelation 11, verses 1 to 14:

“¹ And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. ² But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. ³ And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

“⁴ These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. ⁵ And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. ⁶ These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. ⁷ And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. ⁸ And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. ¹¹ 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. ¹² And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. ¹³ And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. ¹⁴ The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.”

Now as we have been studying the book of Revelation, we have seen that chapter 10 at verse 8 through chapter 11 at verse 14 describe for us the gospel preaching that is going to go on between the first and the second coming of Christ. This passage tells us about the gospel preaching that is going on all during the time of the seven churches and the seven seals and the seven trumpets. All of these things run parallel with each other, and all of them occur all throughout the church age.

What we see as we look at this section from Revelation 10:8 to Revelation 11:14 is how the gospel is going to be received in this age, and how the preachers of the gospel are going to be treated in this age. What we see is that while the gospel is sweet to those who believe it and sweet to those who proclaim it, yet the world in general reacts viciously to the preaching of the

gospel. The elect receive and believe the gospel, but the vast majority of humanity despises the gospel and persecutes those who preach it.

It is a painful and difficult thing to preach the gospel to a hostile and a hateful world. It makes us sick in our stomach to enter into conflict and to enter into spiritual warfare, and to endure the rejection and scorn of others, and to experience the bitter hatred that they express toward us. And yet, out of a love for Christ and out of a desire to see His name and glory proclaimed, we preach the gospel anyway. And out of a love for the lost and out of a desire to see them saved, we preach the gospel anyway. And out of a love for the truth and out of a delight in the truth, we preach the gospel anyway. This is what believers have always done, and this is what believers will always do, in spite of the bitter opposition that they receive.

What this passage does in Revelation chapter 10 and verse 8, through chapter 11 and verse 14, is enable us to understand what the spiritual warfare of preaching the gospel to the lost looks like and what we should expect when we preach the gospel to a hostile world. And after looking at this passage in chapter 10 and verse 8 through chapter 11 and verse 14, some may ask, Why preach the gospel at all, if this is the reaction that we're going to get? People try to hurt us. We have bitter conflict with them, and eventually they destroy us. Why should we preach the gospel at all?

Well, we do so because this how God calls out His elect from among the lost. It is because this is how you, yourself, got saved. Somebody was willing to take the risk of receiving a hostile response from you, like they had from so many people before, and yet out of love to you, they preached the gospel to you *anyway*. And aren't you glad that they did? You bet you are, and you must do the same for others.

And as you preach the gospel, what are you doing? You are looking for God's elect among the sea of humanity to whom you speak, and you will know them by the response they give to you and to your message of salvation from sin. The response of God's elect to the preaching of the gospel will be different than the vast majority of the responses you have gotten. They will be receptive and they will want to hear more, and this is the response you live for, and that you long for, and that you look for, and this is the response that fills you with joy.

This is why you put up with the bitter conflict and the hostile reaction you get from the vast majority of people, because from among them, you are looking for that elect person who God is drawing to Himself and who He will bring to saving faith in Jesus Christ. And as for all those hostile responses, you simply endure them and you use spiritual weapons and spiritual responses to them, and you fight the good fight of faith against them. This is the nature of the warfare between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness in this age and all throughout this age, and in every generation until Jesus returns.

So what we want to do this morning as we look at this passage before us is examine this spiritual warfare of preaching the gospel.

In the first place then this morning, let us consider together the description of the witnesses. The description of the witnesses is found in verses 3 and 4. Notice he says, “³ And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. ⁴ These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”

Last week as we looked at verses 1 and 2, we saw the conflict between the church and the world that will occur all throughout the time between the first and the second coming of Christ. We saw the church described as a temple in verse 1, that is under the protection of God. We saw in verse 2 that the world, here called the Gentiles, tramples the church under its feet. But this trampling of the church by the world under its feet does not destroy the church, because the church has the protection of God. Furthermore, this trampling of the church by the world not only does not destroy the church, it also does not silence the church. The church continues to bear bold and public witness before the world, and this bold and public witness is represented by the symbolism of these two witnesses that are introduced to us in verse 3. Verse 3 says, “And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Now there are several reasons why it is that these two witnesses are not two literal men, but instead, these two witnesses are visual symbolic representations of the witness of all the believers, all throughout the entire church age. And what I want to do is set before you several reasons why these two witnesses are symbolic of the witness of all of the believers throughout the entire church age, between the first and the second coming of Christ.

First of all, these two witnesses prophesy for the entire church age. It says in verse 3 that they prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, which is a symbolic number that we saw last week represents the entire period between the first and the second coming of Christ—a time period that has now lasted over 2,000 years, and therefore, these cannot be literal men, because these are men who are prophesying during the entire time between the first and the second coming of Christ.

Secondly, these two men symbolize the witness of the church and of the believers because two witnesses were necessary to give competent legal testimony in a court of law. Deuteronomy 19 and verse 15 says that at the mouth of two witnesses, a matter would be established as being true when testimony was being given to establish a fact. The truthfulness of the facts of the gospel and the truthfulness of the message of the gospel is therefore symbolized by these two witnesses as they bear witness to the world. Jesus said in John 8 and verse 17, “It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.” And so there is a sense in which these two witnesses are bringing a testimony in the court of God against the world for their wickedness, bearing witness to that wickedness, and calling them to repentance.

Thirdly, when Jesus commissioned His disciples to go out and bear witness of His message and His coming, He sent them out two by two, and we see this pattern replicated over and over again

throughout the New Testament. In Luke chapter 10 and in verse 1, it says, "...the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." Now Jesus is coming, isn't He? And what is He doing? He's sending out His disciples to go before Him into all the world, proclaiming His gospel, and declaring that He is coming along behind us, and He will personally appear to you and speak to you and bring His judgment or His salvation to you, based upon how you respond to the witness that is brought.

Fourthly, since the temple and the city of verses 1 and 2 of chapter 11 are symbolic of the church, then it stands to reason that the two witnesses are symbolic of the church as well. Remember verse 1, the temple—what was that symbolic of? The church. Verse 2, the city that is trampled under foot, the holy city that the Gentiles trample under foot—that represented the church, didn't it? So it stands to reason in verse 3 that the two witnesses would also represent the church and her witness.

Then fifthly, following verse 3 in verse 4, these two witnesses are also said to be two olive trees and two candlesticks, which are clearly symbolic designations. Now we have symbolic images of the church in the verses preceding verse 3, and we have symbolic images in the verse following verse 3, so it stands to reason that verse 3 is a symbolic image as well. So the two witnesses represent the church on earth, bearing witness through the gospel preaching of ministers and missionaries and ordinary Christians as they go about their daily lives. Day by day, every day, for all the days between the first and second coming, God's people will bear witness to God's message to a hostile world. Every day of the symbolic one thousand two hundred and sixty days, the church is going to preach the gospel to the world.

It says in verse 3 that these two witnesses, which represent the church on earth bearing witness to the gospel through the preaching of Christians, are clothed in sackcloth. Now sackcloth is a symbol of mourning and sorrow. You remember that when anyone was grief stricken, they would put off their clothes and they would dress themselves in sackcloth. So the church, as it witnesses to the world, is in a condition of grief and mourning. The church mourns and sorrows over the blindness of the world to the free offer of the gospel. The church weeps over the multitudes that go to hell, who could have gone to heaven had they just humbled themselves and repented and believed. It brings grief to a witnessing believer to see so many going to hell.

How many times has your heart been broken and tears been brought to your eyes as you have seen loved ones die in defiance of the gospel, and you know that every day they're burning in hell? Believers reflect the heart of Jesus Christ, who wept over Jerusalem, who cried out with tears, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto her, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as hen gathereth her chicks under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left to you desolate."

You know, this whole notion of Christianity which says that we ought to just go through life happy, happy, happy, as though that's Christian joy, isn't even remotely biblical. Now it's true,

we have the fruit of the Spirit, which is joy. But we also have the sorrow of the Spirit, which is the grief over the lostness of the world and of their defiance of God, and of their damnation in hell. If you can think about people going to hell and not be heartbroken over that, then I have to wonder if you're a Christian at all. So we, all through this age, go about mourning over the lostness of the world and the damnation that is coming to them because of their defiance against God.

Now it's important for us to understand that this work of witnessing for God is a work that could never be done out of human strength, and it's a work that could never be done with merely a human message.

Verse 3 tells us that God will give power to His two witnesses. The church has strength from God to carry out her work, and in that power and strength she is able to accomplish her task.

You remember what Jesus told the apostles in Acts chapter 1 and verse 8: You stay here in Jerusalem, because you will receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Jesus recognized that the disciples could not accomplish the work of being witnesses to Him, without power being given to them. Notice Revelation 11 and verse 3: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses." So verse 3 tells us that we do not have to do this work in human strength. God will give us divine power to be witnesses unto Him, and He will do it through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

But verse 3 also tells us that the church has a divinely given message; that is, they will speak the prophecy of God. Notice verse 3: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall"—what?—"prophecy." They will prophesy. You see, our message is not merely a human message that arises out of the human imagination. Our message is that of proclaiming divine revelation, and nothing but divine revelation—the prophecy that comes from God that is contained in the little book that was given to John, to eat and to swallow and to speak before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.

Paul told Timothy in Second Timothy 4, verses 2 to 5, to preach the word, whether it was popular or not. He told him to patiently teach the word, exhorting and reproofing and rebuking those that he preached that word to. He told him the time would come when people would not endure gospel preaching, and they would seek out teachers who would tell them what they wanted to hear. He told him that he would endure afflictions as a result, but he says, Timothy, stick to the message. Keep doing the work of an evangelist, and trust the message to do its work in the lives of God's elect. Timothy, speak the prophecy of God contained in the word of God—nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else. The little book given to John in chapter 10—that's all we need. *It* is the prophecy which we speak.

So the church has the power of God and the church has the message of God, to give them the strength and to give them the content that they need in order to be faithful witnesses of God.

But that is not all. Notice verse 4: “These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” In the description of these witnesses, we have further information given to us. Here are two more visual symbolic images used to describe the witnesses of the gospel—the visual symbolic image of two olive trees, and then of two candlesticks. This imagery is taken directly out of Zechariah chapter 4, which we have looked at a couple of times previously.

In Zechariah chapter 4, you have this candlestick, a candelabra with the seven lamps, like the menorah in the Holy place. Then above this candlestick is a bowl, from which seven pipes go to these seven lamps that burn oil. Then there are two olive trees, and these two olive trees pour oil into the bowl, and from the bowl, the oil goes through the pipes to the seven oil lamps on the candelabra. That’s the image that’s there in Zechariah chapter 4. And it’s said there that the olive tree produces the oil and feeds that candlestick so that the light the candlestick contains never goes out. In Zechariah chapter 4, the olive tree and the oil that it produces is representative of the Holy Spirit. The candlestick and the light it produces is representative of the church and the light of the gospel that it preaches into a darkened world.

Now you recall that Jesus uses the visual symbolic image of candlesticks to represent the seven churches in Revelation chapter 1. As He talks to these churches, He says, You be faithful, or I’ll take your candlestick away; that is, the light that you’re supposed to shed to the world will be extinguished. Furthermore, Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount that believers are the light of the world, and He goes on to describe them as candles set on a candlestick that gives light to all that are in the house. So since the candlestick represents the seven churches, this is one more reason why these two witnesses represent the church as well, and are not individuals.

So then, it is because the church is constantly supplied with the oil of the Spirit that the lamp of the church’s witness is not quenched by the opposition of evil men. We have the Spirit of God pouring out the oil of God so that the lamps remain lit, shedding the light of the gospel into the world. The Holy Spirit continually ignites the light of gospel witness in the lives of the believers. That’s what verse 4 is telling us. The work of God is done “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord,” in Zechariah chapter 4 and verse 6, where all of this imagery is set forth. Now notice that the last phrase of Revelation 11 and verse 4 says that these two witnesses stand before the God of the earth. And this is virtually a quote of Zechariah 4:14.

Now these two witnesses who are olive trees and candlesticks have the power of the Spirit in order to be able to shed the light, are “standing before the God of the earth.”

The reason that phrase is there, is to first convey to us the idea that God has commissioned them to carry out their work, and that He will empower them and enable them to be able to do it. They’re standing before Him, and He, as it were, sends them.

Secondly, they do their work for God with their eyes on God, seeking the approval of God. They're standing before Him, and as they're doing their work, they're under His eye, He is in their eye, and it is in the light of that perspective that they do their work.

Thirdly, they fear no man upon the earth, because God is the God of the earth, and God exercises power and dominion over every unsaved person upon it.

Just as Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel the prince were able to complete the Old Covenant temple through the power of the Holy Spirit, in spite of the opposition of all the enemies that were around them, in the same way, these two witnesses will be able to complete the New Covenant temple, the church, through the power of the Spirit as well, in spite of all of the opposition that is around them. And thus this imagery from Zechariah chapter 4 is brought forward to describe the work of the church in its witness to the world in Revelation chapter 11.

That brings us to our second major point this morning. Having seen the description of the witnesses in verses 3 to 4, notice in the second place, the power of the witnesses in verses 5 to 6. It says, “⁵ And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. ⁶ These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.”

Now even though these two witnesses are proclaiming the sweet message of the gospel, proclaiming the good news of salvation, and proclaiming the free grace of God, they receive anything but a warm welcome from the world. Twice it says in verse 5 that men will attempt to hurt them. Notice verse 5: “And if any man will hurt them,” and verse 5 again, “and if any man will hurt them.” That phrase appears twice in verse 5. So men will attempt to hurt them in response to their gospel preaching. People will try to injure them and harm them when they preach the gospel to them.

Now you might ask, Why? Why, when you preach the gospel to people, do they want to hurt you in return? Well, because the gospel is a direct affront to the pride of man and the self-will of man and the self-righteousness of man. The gospel requires men to submit themselves to the sovereignty of God, it requires them to confess their sinfulness to God, and it requires them to humble themselves before God. And these things are an affront to fallen man, who wants to serve only himself and who wants to answer to no one but himself. And when you say, No, you've got to serve God and you've got to answer to God, he takes that as a direct threat to his personal sovereignty, to his self-will, and to his self-righteousness.

So the unsaved man views the gospel not as good news; the unsaved man views the gospel as an assault on his personal sovereignty and as an affront to his pride and his self-righteousness. Feeling assaulted, he assaults us in return, and as verse 5 says, seeks to hurt us, to injure us, and to harm us. This spiritual warfare leveled against us is something we have to recognize is going to happen. This is spiritual warfare that is leveled against us, and this is a war we have to engage

in with the spiritual weapons that God has left at our disposal. We must fight back against those who seek to silence our gospel witness, and these verses tell us now that is to be accomplished.

Notice the language of verses 5 and 6. It says, “⁵ And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. ⁶ These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” What is that? That’s the church fighting back against the world that’s trying to hurt them.

This passage reminds us of the ministry of Elijah. In Second Kings chapter 1, verses 1 to 17, you’ll recall Ahab sent out 50 men with a captain to capture him and drag him back to the palace. And what did Elijah do? He called down fire from heaven, right? And it consumed that captain and those 50 men. You can read all about that in Second Kings 1, 1 to 17. And then Ahab sent out another group, and Elijah called down fire from heaven and burned up that captain and his 50 men. Twice Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume the captain and the 50 soldiers who came to arrest him and to harm him. And what did we have there? A physical act of warfare.

But here under the New Covenant, we have spiritual acts of warfare. Notice the fire in verse 5 doesn’t come down from heaven. Where does it come from? It comes out of the mouth of the two witnesses. This means that the enemies of the gospel are killed by the power of the word of God that proceeds out of the mouth of the people of God as they preach the gospel. God says to Jeremiah the prophet in Jeremiah 5 and verse 14, “...behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.”

Now never once did Jeremiah ever call down fire from heaven, but Jeremiah spoke with his mouth, and God said, That’s going to be like fire and it’s going to burn up all of these people. And you know what? It did in the captivity, did it not? When the judgments of God fell upon Israel, the Babylonian king came, leveled the place, burned it to the ground, slaughtered the people, and hauled the remnant off to captivity for 70 years. The pronouncements of God’s wrath and judgment that proceeded out of the mouth of Jeremiah burned up the people. It brought God’s judgment down on them.

So here we have an indication of the meaning of Revelation chapter 11 and verse 5, when it says, “fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies.” When we pronounce the judgments of God contained in the word of God against the wicked, those are not empty words. God honors the threats against the haters of His person and His people that He makes in the Scriptures. And when we pronounce those threats against those who persecute us, God honors those threats and brings destruction upon them.

The wicked may scorn us and they may scorn our message of God’s coming judgment upon them, but the words we speak are not empty words and they will be performed by the Lord who gave them. The point is, no one can harm God’s witnesses before their mission has been

accomplished, and when they try, the judgments of God we pronounce against them destroy them. Jesus said in Luke chapter 10 and verse 19, “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions...” Those represent the satanic opposition that is raised against us. “I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Those who try to hurt the believers only succeed in bringing destruction upon themselves. The kingdoms that have persecuted the church have all fallen, and the church goes on unharmed, continually expanding across the globe and continually growing in numbers. After all, where is the Roman Empire? Where is the Ottoman Empire? Where is Hitler’s Third Reich? They and many other kingdoms are gone, but the church goes on.

We use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to smite those who smite us with their literal swords, and it is a historical fact that the sword of the Spirit has prevailed over the sword of the kingdoms of men in the last 2,000 years, and it will continue to prevail. A gun is a poor weapon to use against the word of God. The kingdom of God has never been extinguished, but the kingdoms of men that persecuted Christianity, too numerous to list, have disappeared into oblivion. They have, in the words of verse 5, been devoured and killed.

Now notice verse 6: “These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” Here in verse 6, the power of the two witnesses, that is, the power of the church throughout this age, is further described. The work of Elijah in First Kings 17 and verse 1, in withholding the rain for three and a half years in Israel, and the work of Moses in turning the water to blood and smiting the earth with all kinds of plagues are further indications of the spiritual weapons that the church possesses.

Now while the power of verse 5 was directed against men themselves, the power of verse 6 is directed against nature; that is, against that which supports and sustains men. Disasters in the realm of nature, as we saw in the first four trumpet judgments back in chapter 8, have smitten the persecutors of the people of God, and are God’s punishment for their persecution against the people of God, all throughout this age.

The point of verse 5 and verse 6 is that the wicked world will not be able to prevail against the church to any significant degree, or to stop the church from fulfilling her mission. The world fights against the church, and the church fights back against the world with spiritual weapons of faith and prayer and blameless lives, calling upon God to protect them, to vindicate them, and to punish the wicked, both directly and in their support structures, and God answers those prayers, gives His people the victory, and defeats the kingdoms of the world. The church prevails in the battle. You remember that Ahab did not prevail against Elijah, and Pharaoh did not prevail against Moses. And the kingdoms of this world will not prevail against the church, until the work of the church is done.

The point is this: Our prayers set in motion the judgments of God against the wicked in this age. When we cry out to the Lord for deliverance and we cry out to the Lord for vengeance, He hears us and He acts, and we've already seen that in the fifth seal. Remember when the saints under the altar cry out to the Lord and say, "Lord, how long?" And you saw the saints in Revelation chapter 8, verses 1 through 5, crying out to the Lord at the altar of incense, and the seven trumpet judgments follow. When we cry out to the Lord for deliverance and vengeance, He hears us and He acts. The wicked should fear to harm the church, lest the God of the church smite them with the trumpets of His judgments.

What Christ is telling us is that we have just as great resources and power at our disposal as we fight our spiritual warfare, as Elijah and Moses had at their disposal when they fought their spiritual warfare, because we worship and serve the same God they did. And while their help was in the realm of the physical and our help is in the realm of the spiritual, it is no less powerful and it is no less impressive. Therefore, we need to press on with confidence as we evangelize the world. We are not only marked out for protection from God, as verse 1 made clear to us, but we also have given to us God's power and God's Spirit and God's authority to call down His judgments upon our persecutors who try to hurt us.

So the church cannot be stopped, and the church cannot be defeated, and the church will prevail over the world, and the church will accomplish the work that God has given to her to do. That's the message of Revelation chapter 11, verses 1 through 6.

Next week, God willing, we'll take up verse 7, where it says, "And when they shall have finished their testimony," that is, when the work was all done and accomplished—then certain things are going to occur. We're going to look into those things, but we're not there yet, historically and eschatologically. We are still the two witnesses with the power of God and the message of God, standing in the presence of God with grief and sorrow and sackcloth, mourning over the lostness of the world, having the power, the oil of the Holy Spirit, making our lamps of witness bright, preaching the gospel into the darkness. And as the darkness retaliates, then we have the power and the resources of God to defeat it.

It says in Revelation that they overcame him [the accuser of the brethren] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives to the death. And thus we march forward, we march on, and we roll over the top of the kingdom of darkness and spread the gospel to the whole world, so that all of God's elect are saved and nothing the wicked do can ever stop that or keep it from being completed.

So, evangelism is not a walk in the park, is it? It is warfare. And we have to fight, but we've been given the whole armor of God. Jesus said to Peter, I'm giving you the keys to kingdom, and what you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and what you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. And whatever that meant, it meant at least this: That heaven recognizes the prayers of the people of God on earth, and heaven cooperates with those prayers. And as it says in Mark chapter 16, the Lord went with them and the Lord worked with them, "confirming the word with

signs following.” And so they went everywhere preaching the word, and the Lord worked with them. And that’s what’s going on with Moses and Elijah—God worked with them. And God is going to work with us as well.

We recognize that people are going to try to hurt us just because you live like a Christian and you preach the truth. But recognize also that God will fight against them for you and with you, and they will not defeat you. And thus: “Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus, going on before.” And so we will triumph. Shall we pray together.

Our Father, we thank you for this wonderful passage that tells us of the protection of the church, the power of the church, and the fact that even though the world tries to trample us under their feet and even though they try to hurt us, we have a far greater power than they—we have the power of the word of God. We have the power of the promises of God. And most of all, we have the power of the person of God, who works with us and on our behalf, bulldozing the enemy down before us, and opening doors of utterance so the gospel may be preached, as Jesus commanded us, in all the world among all nations. And when that work is finally done, then will come the end.

So Father, help us not to be discouraged by the apparent opposition and by the injury that the world strives to bring against us, but help us to realize that in this war, while we may suffer martyrdom, we will never be hurt by it. Thank you, Father, for the victory that Jesus has wrought over the serpent, and that in His victory, we have victory as well. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.