

Revelation 11: 1-4; "Rise and Measure the Temple of God"; Sermon # 79 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on November 11th, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

We have now come to what is one of the most pivotal passages in the whole book of Revelation as far as our trying to understand how the prophecy relates to the day in which we live. If we understand correctly the meaning of this passage, then I believe that we will also understand the meaning of why it was given to John to give to the Church. It is that Christ is building His Church, and the "gates of hell", the strategies of Satan "shall not prevail against it." The book of Revelation has had relevance and application to every generation of believers ever since John wrote it down. Its general application to all believers in all generations since he wrote it gives the message of encouragement to the persecuted and oppressed, that Christ is ruling in the midst of His enemies. And there also are more specific applications given to the Church to persevere in holiness, and in proclaiming the Truth of the Bible in each of the various time periods within the Church age. True Christians are to persevere in holding fast to Christ and to his Word; to expect to have to suffer and to endure for certain and definite periods of time until Christ comes to judge the opposition and make way for His kingdom to advance farther in the world and among the nations than she has before.

I have tried to show you thus far that the book of Revelation from Chapter 6 to Chapter 19 is composed of visions given to the Apostle John that would give to the one who reads an overview of the history of the Church in relation to how she will come to reign upon the earth; how she will fulfill the great commission of Matthew 28: 18, and how she will eventually triumph over the forces that Satan has arrayed against her to prevent her spreading the gospel with greater success to all the nations. I am well aware that God will not be thwarted in regard to the salvation of all of His Elect. He will have His people in every generation. But someday He will also have Christ's cause and kingdom to eventually triumph over all the earth in a general sense. The Father said to His Son in Psalm 110, verse 1, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'" This reign of Christ's Church is predicted specifically in relation to the fall and destruction of the Antichristian powers, the organized systems of opposition, which Satan raised up during the second time period spoken of in this book; the time period of the first six Trumpets, which I have said before, I believe is from 323 A.D. until 756 A.D. In the 1st time period of Rome's opposition we saw that the Church triumphed over

the Pagan Roman Emperors; at least 10 of them, who greatly persecuted Christ's servants. We saw Christ come to judgment upon this evil system of Emperor worship and persecution, in the conversion of Constantine. And the persecution stopped for a short time and Christianity was openly and widely propagated and advanced. Church and State were coupled together in a short but important victory.

But this victory to the advance of Christ's kingdom was short-lived. And what had come in the form of open hostility and severe persecution from outside the Church; having been endured for hundreds of years in the first time period of Church history, now gave way to the plagues of false doctrine and false unbiblical authorities arising from within the Church. We have seen in past sermons that these great systems which oppose the Church's advance are the Papal system of Roman Catholicism in the Western part of the Roman Empire, and the Mohammedan religion in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. Both had their beginning in the errors and heresies which came as a plague to the Church in this second time period of the Trumpets. Literally, many multiplied millions of souls have been lost to eternal destruction because of these doctrinal heresies, and the forward advance of the kingdom of Christ has been hindered greatly.

Rome is the last of the World Monarchies which is mentioned in the book of Daniel as the kingdom which would be ruling the world in the days when Christ came. Daniel 2: 44 says, "And in the day of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people." The four world monarchies which ruled the world of their day are pictured well for us in the vision that Nebuchadnezzar had of a great statue. The head of gold was his own kingdom of Babylon, the chest and arms of silver was the Medes and Persians, the belly and thighs of bronze was Greece, and the legs and feet and toes were Rome. Daniel was not given the name of the kingdom specifically, but we know it is Rome because it was in the days of the Roman Empire's world rule that Christ's kingdom was set up by His coming in the flesh. Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, suffered and died under its direct authority in a human sense. So I believe that we should understand the opposition of Satan to the advance of Christ's kingdom, the building of His Church, to come in all of its major systematic forms through the Roman Empire. The Pagan Roman Empire declined and fell during the second time period only to make way for another manifestation of itself spiritually, to all the world, in the third time period, in the Papal system of Roman Catholicism. It is the True Church in relation to this false church and system which is being measured here in Revelation 11. There is a measurement being taken of the true Church of Jesus Christ and of her power to witness to the truth against this false system,

which is being spoken of here. This afternoon I want to look first at the measurement of the True Church itself. And then I want to look at the measurement of the time that the Church will be trampled underfoot by the enemies of Truth during this third time period of Church history. And then if we have any time left we will introduce the 2 witnesses who prophecy during this time period.

1st- The measurement of the True Church itself. (Verses 1 and 2)

John says, "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod." "And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there." "But leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles." In the Old Testament there was a literal physical temple that was built by Solomon which had an inner court and an outer court. The inner court is mentioned in 1 Kings 6: 36, "And he built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams." The outer court is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 4: 9 where it says, "Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and great court and doors for the court; and he overlaid these doors with bronze." The outer court is here referred to as "the great court. In the temple there was this inner court which was set apart to the priests and the Levites and their ministrations. The outer court was for all and any of the Israelites to come and worship in. We have seen in our study of the book of Revelation and in the study of all prophetic things, that many things which are literal physical are used to represent things literal spiritual. One thing described actually means another thing being referred to. It is very important that you and I see this here. The temple being referred to, and measured, is not the temple in Jerusalem in the Old Testament days, but rather it is the true Church of Jesus Christ in these days of Antichrist in this 3rd time period that we are now beginning to study.

I want you to turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 6, and we will see this truth. Verse 14 says, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." "For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?" "And what communion has light with darkness?" "And what accord has Christ with Belial?" "Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?" "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?" "For you (plural) are the temple of the living God." The Church of Jesus Christ is God's temple. The Jewish temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. The temple is now the people who have been called of God and are worshippers of God through the finished work and the ongoing intercession of Jesus Christ. This temple and true worship are "trampled down" when false doctrine, false worship, and false authorities are introduced in place of Christ and the worship that the Bible commands. The whole Church of God under the name of a temple is divided into the outer and

the inner court. "The inner court is measured, and the altar, and those that worship there. The outward court is left out and given to the Gentiles and they tread down the holy city forty and two months. Listen to Matthew Poole in his commentary. "There is no great doubt, but the same persons are here to be understood by the court which is outside the temple, (that is, outside the inner court) and the holy city; and by them, both the generality of those people who come under the name of the Christian church, who are all of them in some sense, a holy people, as all the Jews were; yet for the greatest part of them, John is commanded to omit, or neglect them, as those who would not endure a measure by the reed, and of whose preservation God would take no such care, but give them up to the Gentiles, to be trodden under foot; by which many learned and good men understand God's suffering Antichrist to have a power over and against them." What Poole is saying is that the Christian Church is this temple and the Christian Church is the holy city, and yet a distinction is made between those who are inner court and outer court worshippers. Inner court worshippers alone, are those who are measured. John is here commanded to measure "the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship there." Outer court worshippers; he is told to leave them out, "for it is given to the Gentiles to trample down." What is being said here is that there will be during this third time period a great number of churches and people whose witness and testimony would be trampled down by the "Gentiles" which is a word with reference to the Antichristian forces. The Antichristian powers would take control of the outer court worship, the worship of many churches, and change it into something that does not honor God. They would change the very gospel itself into something that would not save the souls of men and put doctrines and practices into the place of the true ones given in the Bible, and thus the visible Church would be corrupted and defiled for this period of time mentioned; the forty two months.

It was always the great fear of true worshipping Jews under the Old Covenant that Gentile forces would come into the temple of God and defile it with their pagan and idolatrous worship. What the true worshippers of God under the New Covenant have needed to fear more than anything was that same thing happening in the temple of God in our days. And of course, history has now proven to us that this prophecy has come to pass. The visible church which is seen as representing true Christianity to an unbelieving world is known to the world as the Roman Catholic Church. And there are many other visible churches which are sympathetic to Rome, such as the Church of England, and many of the Liberal Protestant churches of our day as well. The whole of what is known to the world as Christianity has today been largely taken over by Rome's view of salvation. It is a gospel of sacramental and ceremonial works and the

truth of God's Word, the Bible is neglected. But notice that John is "given a reed like a measuring rod" and told to measure the temple. This reed is representative of the Word of God itself, which is the rule for every true Christian and every true church of Jesus Christ. The angel of the Lord, here in our passage, our Lord Jesus Himself, is telling John that there will be a true Church which will bear a true witness all during this time period of Antichristian oppression. She will be measured to be preserved during this time period of the forty two months.

This leads me secondly to speak of the measurement of the time that is mentioned here. (Verses 2 and 3)

It is mentioned in two different ways referring to one time period in verses 2 and 3. "But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles." "And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months." That is the first reference; forty-two months. Verse 3 - "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." These two time periods are not representative of indefinite periods of time, or of specific literal periods of time, but rather represent the one period of time in which the Antichristian powers will trample down the outer court of the temple which is Christ's Church. The Bible itself gives us a number of examples in the Old Testament which will give us understanding as to how we should view these times. Turn with me to Daniel 7: 25 where we will find a key for our understanding this passage in Revelation. We will be looking more at this passage and other passages related to the Antichrist in coming weeks. But let us get a sample of the prophetic times of Antichrist here. "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law." "Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time." A time, times and a half a time are words which mean a year, another two years and a half a year; three and a half years. And this time period is the same as the two we have just read about in our passage in Revelation 11. 42 months is three and a half years. And 1260 days is three and a half years of 30 day months. And if we will just remember that in prophecy, that the time of days is actually representative of years, here in this passage, we will come to the true knowledge of the length of time of this period of the Antichristian powers trampling down the Holy City, Christ's true Church. We will speak more about this day-year concept which is clearly taught in several passages of the Old Testament scriptures, next week.

As we close this sermon, let us apply these truths that we have studied today to ourselves by asking, "What kind of a worshipper am I?" Do I worship God in spirit and truth? Am I an inner court or an outer court worshipper? Do I bear

witness to the truth of Jesus Christ by learning to speak to others about what true worship is and what false worship is? Am I willing to take my stand against Antichristian doctrines and practice in order that the truth might emerge and people be really saved from their sins? Remember that Jesus Christ made the good confession before Pontius Pilate. Pilate asked Jesus whether He was a king? And Jesus said to him, "You say rightly that I am a king." "For this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." "Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Jesus was willing to suffer for telling the truth about Himself. Are we willing to suffer for the truth of speaking to others about true worship, which Christ died to bring about? Are we willing to bear witness for the truth? In the Bible it says, "I believed, therefore I spoke." I pray that this will be true of all of us here in this church.