

**Revelation 11: 6-10; "When they finish their Testimony", Sermon # 82 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered on December 2nd, 2007, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Living the Christian life, for every one who has come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, is a testimony to Him. It is a testimony of Christ's ability and power to save us from our sins, and it is a testimony to His ability and power which are given to us to be holy and to overcome all the trials, difficulties, and persecutions that come our way. This is a great part of what God, through Jesus Christ has called us to. It is not apparent to Christians who live in the United States of America at this time, what strength of trials came to the saints of former generations in overcoming the Antichristian powers in the past 1200 years of Church history. This is what will be occupying our thoughts as we study Chapters 13 -18. The Church of Jesus Christ, we have seen, will deliver their testimony against the false doctrine of Antichrist during this whole 3rd period of Church history, the time of the 1260 days prophecy. I have shown you the evidence from the Bible that it is right for us to conclude that these 1260 days are prophetic days here in the book of Revelation. They are actually 1260 years, represented by days, even according to the principle used by God Himself in relation to His judgment upon Israel's unbelief in connection with the bad report of 10 of the 12 spies who went to spy out Canaan. Theirs was a bad testimony. Joshua and Caleb had brought back a good report and said that even though there were giants in the land, that because of the Lord's power with them, they would most certainly be able to take the land. The bad report of the 10 said that it was not possible. The people were not willing to go up and do what the Lord had commanded them to do, which was to go up and take the land which the Lord had promised to give them; a land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore the Lord told them in Numbers 14: 4, "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection." The other passage that I showed you concerning these days being years was Ezekiel 4: 4. Here Ezekiel was commanded to "Lie on his left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it." "According to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity." "For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel." Then when he had completed this prophetic exercise, he was to turn over to his right side and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. God says to him, "I have laid on you a day for each year." This was Ezekiel's prophesying; his giving his testimony of God's great anger against them for their sins. God was; through Ezekiel's testimony, charging them as a nation with guilt. They had to endure

His wrath and anger against their successive generations because of their sins. The sins committed by one generation were built upon and expanded by the next generation during those years, for the most part. Where these years were to begin in time, and where they were to end, are not certain in the minds of commentators. Some date them beginning with Solomon's days and run them forward to the time of the captivity in Zedekiah's time. Others begin them with Jeroboam's setting up of the golden calves to be worshipped at Dan and Beersheba, and continue them to the time of Ezekiel himself. Others want to begin them at Ezekiel's time and run the time of their bearing iniquity forward. Truly it is hard to determine.

It is no different with the 1260 days prophecy in the Book of Revelation. Some begin them in the year 310. Others in the year 400 or thereabouts. Others think 610. Others 756 A.D. Many commentators could not believe that the 1260 years could start so late as this. Jonathan Edwards was one of them. But he and the others which date before this time, have all proven to be wrong. But it seems hard to me to believe that the rise of Antichrist could begin any later than the 800. Image worship was re-established in the church of Rome in 780 and Charlemagne called the former Roman Empire the Holy Roman Empire in the year 800. So it is possible that we might see the end of the 1260 days prophecy in our lifetime. Anywhere from 2015 - 2050 A.D. We want to look at how the Witnesses finish their testimony this afternoon. We want to look first at the power of these Witnesses. Then we want to look at the slaying of these Witnesses. And then we want to see what will happen to the dead bodies of these Witnesses.

### **1st- The Power of these Witnesses** (Verse 6)

"These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire." The references here are to Elijah in 1 Kings 17: 1 and Moses and Aaron in Exodus 7: 20. In the first, we find Elijah announcing to Ahab king of Israel, "As the Lord God lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." It was 3 and a half years that this was the case. It exactly fits with the time of our text and the ministry of prophecy during these 1260 days or years. Ahab was guilty of Idolatry as many of the kings before him. But the Lord had decided that since Ahab "did more to provoke Him to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him." It was the greatness of his sins that would provoke God to bring this judgment upon all Israel. Elijah was the man of God, God's witness, and the word of truth was in his mouth. He was a man of prayer and he prayed and it did not rain in Israel for 3 and a half years. It was not simply his prophesying that brought this judgment. It was his praying earnestly and fervently that it would not. This had grave consequences for both Ahab and everyone in Israel. A famine came because of it and many people were suffering and dying.

Similarly, in our text, we have the prophesying of the two Witnesses and they have power to shut heaven. Not the heavens, but heaven; so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy. Heaven; that is the way to heaven and the blessings of the "rain" of grace, which come from heaven through the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ; this is shut up to those who would oppose the truth of the gospel of grace, and substitute in its place a doctrine of works salvation; a doctrine of sacramental salvation; a doctrine of the idolatrous worship of Mary and the saints. This shutting up of heaven would also bring about a famine; a famine for the hearing of the words of God. I think that this very simply means that men of God who have been pastors or leaders in the true Church of Jesus Christ, down through this 1260 years would have the power, through their preaching and praying to say to those who were trampling down the Holy City with their false doctrine and idolatrous worship, "You are not going to be receiving the good influences of God's grace (pictured in the falling of rain) to water your souls and thus save them from sin, because you refuse, twist, and reject the truth of the Bible. The Bible is the book which forms the basis of the "prophecy" and the testimony of the two Witnesses.

The other reference is to Moses and Elijah in Exodus 7: 19 and following. It says there, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, "Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood." "And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone." "and Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded." "So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants." "And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood." "The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river." Waters in this case, are those life giving streams of doctrine. The Church of Rome tells people that they are becoming true Christians by partaking of the water of their streams and rivers of doctrine. But really the waters are filled with the contaminates of false doctrine which will eventually kill those who partake. It will lead them to hell. Those who join with them drink of these waters and think that they have life. When these waters are struck by the rod of Moses, however, they become blood. It wounds the whole false system so that its life cannot go on as usual. People realize that the fish, creatures which swim in that water are dead and stinking, and the Egyptians; meaning worldly people, begin to realize that they cannot drink of these waters. All of the plagues which Moses and Aaron brought upon Egypt were done in order that Pharaoh would let the people go. So too, all of the labors of prophesying and bringing plagues upon the false system of Roman Catholicism which were done by the true Church throughout the 1260 years, were and are the means of destroying this false system; this Antichrist. We shall see the outworking of this in a more

developed sense in the Chapters on the pouring out of the Vials or the golden Bowls. The true Church which would be in the minority, who would be a remnant at points, would proclaim the truth of the gospel and the truth of the Word of God, in relation to salvation and the way to worship and serve the true and living God.

**Now 2ndly- Let us see and understand that these Witnesses will be slain.**

(Verse 7)

"When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them." This is the first mention of the "beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit." The meaning of this beast is to be found in Daniel Chapter 7, verse 19. Daniel had received a vision of four beasts, and the 4th beast was very powerful and dreadful. It says, "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows." "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom." "Thus he said: "The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces." "The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom." "And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings." "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." This pertains directly to our study here in Revelation 11. This is the beast that will overcome them and kill the 2 Witnesses. This is spiritual warfare that we are talking about. The 4th beast is Rome as she developed from a Pagan Political Empire into a Pagan Spiritual Empire. The ten kings are the respective governments of the 10 countries of Western Europe which Rome was divided into in the days after the Pagan Roman Empire fell. This beast, which developed out of the Pagan Roman Empire into the Papal Roman Empire is what is being spoken of. It is this Spiritual Beast backed by the power of 10 political kingdoms in Europe which will as it says here in verse 7, make war against the Witnesses, overcome them, and kill them. It is not speaking of the death of 2 individual men. It is speaking of the death of the witness of Christians in a general and public sense, in at least that part of the World (Western Europe) and perhaps

also greatly prevailing over Christ's cause and kingdom in all the rest of the nations of the World. We will meet with a further description of the Antichristian beast in Chapter 13, verse 7 where it says, "It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them." "And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation." This may indeed include the United States of America.

**And then 3rdly- We need to see what will happen to the "bodies" of these Witnesses.** (Verse 8)

"And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." "Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves." "And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth." It appears from these words that there is a time yet to come, when the Witness of the true Church of Jesus Christ will be so worked against, and spoken against, so attacked by the combined efforts of the Roman Catholic church, the Liberal Protestant Churches, and the Mohammedan forces, that she will be overcome and killed in her witness. This "death" will last for 3 and one half years if the year-for-a-day principle of prophetic time is true. 3 and one half days would be three and one half years. These 2 Witnesses, which I have explained to you to mean Church Teaching and Church Government, will not entirely cease to exist, but their public testimony will be killed for a time. It is not as though true Christians or any true churches will cease to exist, yet it will be very true that everyone who has aligned themselves with these Antichristian forces will believe that our cause; the cause of the Bible, the cause of seeing people converted and turned from sin and darkness, which is so absolutely essential to living the Christian life; this cause will be publicly rejoiced over in a world wide sense, as being dead. You can see how it could possibly happen with the influence of the media being such that they control much of what is seen and believed by people; and that deception coming in connection with the working of Satan among the nations to blind people to the true gospel and holy living. Churches will not be able to proclaim Christ and conversion publicly. Christ and Biblical faith and life will be put to great derision and ridicule by many, many people. You say to me, "How could God permit this to happen?" I think that the answer is because God would have Christ's Church to go through sufferings much like that of her dear Savior before she triumphs among the nations. Just as Christ was in this world, so shall she be. Christ had to endure sufferings and death in order to triumph over the forces of darkness, the World, and our sin. Even so, His holy Church has to go through this "death" in relation to her cause, which is Christ's cause; the cause of seeing people won to faith in Him in a world-wide sense, in order that she might triumph in the same way. In this way,

she becomes like her Savior, Master, and Lord in the ultimate sense. It will tend to God's glory in a very great way.

The dead bodies of these witnesses will not be buried for these 3 and one half years. The whole cause of Christ will be mocked, jeered at, derided their weakness; the Antichristian forces wanting to enjoy their great triumph over them. They will be rejoicing over their defeat. They will send gifts to one another that this is such a certain triumph. These Witnesses had, it says in verse 10, "tormented" those who dwell on the earth by the things that they believed and the way that they lived, and because they preached to people that they should repent and believe the gospel and live holy lives. But this will not be the end of the witness of the Church of Jesus Christ, even as Christ's death was not the end of His life or ministry. Christ was 3 days and 3 nights in the tomb, and afterwards He rose again. And even so these Witnesses shall be 3 and a half days(years) in their death, in their "tomb" as it were; and they shall rise again. And O what a resurrection it shall be. We will see this the next time that I preach to you.