

Revelation 14: 9-11; “If Anyone Worships the Beast”, Sermon # 106 in the series – “The Faithful and True Witness”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 6th, 2011, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

Chapter 14 in the Book of Revelation represents a turning point in Church history. I think that this picture in verse 1 represents the time of the Reformation, when the truth of the gospel and true worship was recovered to the Church, and the witness of the true Church went forward significantly. The Lamb, who represents our Lord Jesus Christ is pictured as standing upon Mt. Zion, with His one hundred forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. The one hundred forty-four thousand represent the entire number of those chosen by God, who during this third time period of Church History, are faithful as witnesses bearing witness to the truth of sound biblical teaching and righteous Church government. Or, we might refer to them as the witnesses to truth and righteousness in relation to the Church. They are witnesses to the truth of Old Testament and New; the entire written Word of God. The Church government that I believe is being represented here is the Biblically right view that Christ is the only Head of the Church. Biblical teaching and Church government are essential to the existence of having a true witness for Christ in the world today. Without them truth falls in the streets of the City of God. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the false religion of his day among the Old Testament people of God says 59: 13, says that they were guilty of “transgressing and lying against the Lord, and were “departing from their God.” “They spoke oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.” He says – “Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.” That is what false religion does and that is what it promotes. It gets people to utter from their heart words of falsehood.

Similarly, in the time that we live in, the ministry of the preaching of the Word of God, by those called to the task in the local church, has a breadth of ministry which at times must address the false religion which is found within the pale of Christendom so that people will not be deceived by it. In Jeremiah 5, verse 14, God said to Jeremiah, “Because you speak this word, behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.” This was the calling of Jeremiah, to preach the words of judgment to the people of Israel and to the other nations around Israel. In these verses that we are studying this afternoon, that is what we are seeing take place. The angels of verses 6, 8, and now another angel in verse 9, represent the preachers of the Word of God, bearing testimony to the gospel (in verses 6 and 7); declaring the fall of false Babylon (in verse 8). And now in verses 9-12 they are declaring what the consequences will be to those who worship the beast. The 3rd angel of this section of the vision represents as the other 2 did; those pastors and teachers who in this 3rd time period of Church history, declare with a loud voice, to all the people who will listen; the true and everlasting gospel and the fall of false Babylon which is coming. This angel is declaring that there are

terrible consequences in store for those who will participate in, and whole-heartedly support, false worship. They are listed for us here as 1st – Drinking of the wine of the wrath of God. 2nd – Tormented with fire and Brimstone. And 3rd – Having no rest day or night forever and ever.

1st – Let us think together of those who will have to drink of the wine of the wrath of God. (verses 9 and 10)

“Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation.’ I suppose that there may be some here today, or some of those who will read or hear this sermon later on, who would like to know why it is that Roman Catholicism with the Pope as the head of that church, should be considered to be the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Antichrist and thus deserving of this horrible punishment that will come upon them on the Day in which Christ returns. I will give you that answer. It is because no one so well fits the description that the Bible gives. I told you in sermons preached before in Chapter 13 that Antichrist’s name is in connection with his number. And many commentators over the centuries have agreed that the name which the number 666 represents is Lateinos. This idea of the name of the number was put forward first by Irenaeus who lived not long after the Apostle John’s time. The name means, “the Latin kingdom” or “the Latin one”. The Popes of Rome have latinized everything. Masses, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, and all their Papal decrees used to all be done in Latin. In many places they still are. The Scripture used to be read by them in no other language. The Council of Trent, I have told you in past sermons, is the image of the beast. And when defining what the Church of Rome’s doctrine really was; those at the council said that the Latin translation was to be considered to be the only authentic version of the Bible. The Pope is the Antichrist because he takes authority to himself in connection with a false convocation of Bishops to establish him in that office and give him an authority that only belongs to Christ. It is Christ who gives Apostles. It is only Christ who gives the Holy Spirit. But the Pope is supposedly the successor to the Apostle Peter’s authority and office. He is supposedly the Head of the Church on earth. This is indeed very blasphemous in the sight of God.

It is because the bishops who elect the Pope to his office have created this false use of authority; that over the last 12 centuries, a false Christianity has developed which Satan hopes will replace the true. The convocation of Bishops have given to each Pope, by electing him to his office, the supposed ability to render infallible judgments and to create doctrines that are not true. In doing this, they have then suppressed or twisted the actual doctrines of the Holy Scriptures to say something that God does not mean them to say. It is because they have created, maintained, and nourished to this very day, a false gospel that people are saved through being baptized as an infant, and improving upon that supposed grace by adding to it, their own good works, penances, and masses, giving of their money, and faithfully

believing the false teaching which is given to them. They attend the false services of worship, and believing this lie; that they should pledge their supreme allegiance to the Pope and the false doctrines that the church puts forth, they shall be punished forever. The mark on the forehead is their baptism and the mark on their hand is their allegiance to the Pope and all the under-authorities in the Roman Catholic Church. The Popes with the Bishops supporting them, have put forth and practiced false doctrines of how God is to be worshiped, and how the Christian life is to be lived. Many believe in the worship of Mary and statues of the saints. Many pay homage to the Pope. And they are submitting their souls to a false head of the Church in the place of our Lord Jesus Christ. They regard the Pope with a veneration which should only belong to God. They call him, the Vicar of Christ. They call him "His Holiness." In the past, before and after the Reformation, He was called God of Gods. How can a mere man; a man who is a sinner just as we are; a man who takes to himself such titles, not also feel that he has the right to "take his seat in the temple of God" (the Church) and present Himself there as God? (That is; God made manifest in the flesh?) Jesus said that you are to call no man on earth your father, and yet he is called the Holy Father. He has falsely taken the place of the Risen Living Christ who actually does sit at the right hand of God and rules over His Church from that vantage point. But here is a poor sinful mortal, who stands with the whole succession of Popes; mere mortal and sinful men. And he accepts this office and men declare that he is Christ's Vicar; He is Christ's representative on the earth. If this were not enough, if you will take the time to go back and study the history of this false church, you will find that many of these Popes and those who supported and followed them, cruelly persecuted those people who would not receive her false doctrines and false gospel; and instead, they held to the truth of the Scriptures.

Now, I would ask you if you do not think that the punishment is equal to the crime? If you would think of it from God's stand-point for a few minutes I think that it will become clear. God has given us only one way of salvation; plain and simple. It is by grace through faith in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. But here in Roman Catholicism, Popes have exchanged the true gospel for sacramental works, which, when engaged in by the worshiper, supposedly bring them salvation. Do you not think that God is indignant about these things? Do you not think that He will mix a very special concoction of the wine of His wrath for the Popes and the false church to drink because they have turned many away from the true gospel which could have saved their eternal souls? God is faithful to His Word. He will not save a person by another gospel. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians Chapter 1, verse 8 – "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed." Babylon has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication with false religion. She has been unfaithful to God as a church in not sticking to the Bible truth of the gospel and true worship. Many believing in her false gospel will be damned forever, unless they can somehow find the truth and be saved by someone explaining the error. Many in

Roman Catholicism are willing to receive the mark of the name of the beast. They are willing to be baptized in the Church of Rome and to blindly follow her traditions and commandments. But if anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. Let no one here think that this is a little sin, to add to the Word of God or to take away from it. It is the greatest of sins because it deceives and blinds. It is poison in a cup, held out to the nations, to drink and die eternally. Therefore it well deserves from God, the cup of His wrath. It is not some political ruler or figure who is the Antichrist; it is the one who has attempted to supplant the righteous rule of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now 2ndly –The next awful consequence of pledging allegiance to Rome and false religion that is mentioned here in these verses, is that those doing so will be tormented with fire and Brimstone. (verse 10b)

“He (the one who worships the beast) shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” These are the obvious emblems of the judgment of God against those who will not repent of this false worship and false doctrine. And we remember, don’t we, what God did to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sins. He (the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ) came down to see whether the report that had come to Him was true; that the people of those cities were totally given over to sexual perversion as well as the sins of pride and laziness, luxury and intemperance. They were. But Abraham pleaded and interceded for the cities, knowing that Lot and his relatives lived there. He pleaded on the basis that if there were even 10 righteous people in the city that God would not destroy it. And the Lord graciously granted his request; He sent two angels to Sodom to retrieve Lot and those who would come with him, out of the city, before it was destroyed. Only Lot and his two daughters came out. His wife disobeyed the command of the angel saying to her that she should not look back lest she become a pillar of salt. But she did not heed the command; she looked back as the Lord was raining fire and brimstone out of heaven upon the city, and the Lord turned her into a pillar of salt. The Lord has said, “Do not love the world, or the things which are in the world.” “Whoever loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The Lord has declared in his word in Leviticus 18: 22 and Romans Chapter 1, verses 24-28; 1 Corinthians Chapter 6, verse 9; and 1 Timothy 1, verse 10, that homosexuality and other sexual perversions such as the molestation of children are an abomination in His sight. Those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and they are contrary to sound doctrine. And when we look at the Roman Catholic Church with its forbidding of marriage by the clergy, we find that the history of that church is strewn with sexual immorality. It is in the newspapers and it is in the history books. And the shame cannot be wiped away through their false religion of confession and penance. Indeed their confessional booths have been the scenes down through history of the shameful failures of many a priest to be able to keep his own heart. These sins, un-repent-ed of, deserve the torment of eternal fire.

It is not penance that is needed. It is repentance. Biblical repentance is where by the grace of Christ you turn from your sin and forsake your sin; and then God through Jesus Christ cleanses your heart. He by His grace places within you the new desires for holy thoughts and right thoughts. You say, my God would never send these religious Roman Catholic people to hell. The Bible clearly states that because they hold to these false doctrines of theirs and believe in their Pope and priest's absolutions, they shall never be forgiven if they hold to them. Holding to false religion is their sin. It is because they hold to it; that is the reason that they shall suffer the punishment of everlasting fire in the presence of Christ and the holy angels. It is Christ that they are sinning against when they believe that they have something to add, of their works, to His finished work. They thus undermine the true gospel and all sound doctrine. This is very provoking to God and to our Christ.

Now 3rdly – We find that the further consequence of worshiping the beast is that these worshipers will find no rest day or night, forever and ever. (verse 11)

“And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” In Roman Catholicism you will never find true assurance of the forgiveness of sins, and of your having eternal life, because they teach that your works, in a number of ways, must be added to Christ's perfect and finished work; His once-for-all sacrifice on the cross. True assurance comes to the one who is trusting in the promises of the gospel. But when one believes that their works in some way will merit favor with God, the efficacy and power of the true gospel have been taken away. No person can be justified by the works of the law or by their best intentions to be a better person. No, Christ, and faith in Him alone for salvation is the only way to find true assurance. The good works will come after faith in Christ, and by faith in Christ, but not before. A practicing Roman Catholic will not be able to find rest for his or her soul, trusting in some religious things that they are asked to do by a priest; things which are added to the Word of God. That will be the torment to their conscience in this life; that they have not done enough. And that will be their torment forever and ever if they do not come to Christ in accordance with the simple Biblical gospel.

What is the answer? It is to believe the despised true witnesses of Christ's true church. The churches of the Reformation found that light, and proclaimed it, but it tormented those Roman Catholics who thought that they had the truth. The preaching of the ministers in that day was killing them in their consciences. These ministers were like the 2 witnesses spoken of in Revelation chapter 11, verse 10, the witnesses for the truth who faithfully preached the judgments of God upon their false system of doctrine. They are described as “these two prophets who tormented those who dwell on the earth.” “Fire proceeded from their mouth and devoured their enemies” it says in verse 5 of Chapter 11. The “earth” is the visible church which has fallen into false religion. When a man of God faithfully speaks the truth of the Bible to those who are involved in false worship, it is often very tormenting to them. It is like the ministry of Elijah when he confronted the 400 prophets of Baal on Mt.

Carmel and called down fire from heaven to show that God was the only true God. Some of the people were turned back from false worship; but Jezebel sought Elijah's life. And later on in his life, when Elijah told King Ahaziah that he should not seek to inquire of Baal, the god of Ekron, to find out whether he would be healed of his injuries, he also then sought his life. He did not have any assurance in regard to his future from this false god. Elijah, in the Old Testament was one who represents these despised witnesses, both Old Testament and New. In 2nd Kings 1: 9, Elijah went up on a hill, and the messengers of the king came to where he was and told him, "Man of God come down; the king has said, 'Come down.'" And he answered, "If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men. And so it happened. The description of the 2 witnesses in Chapter 11, verse 5 is very much like what the ministries of Moses and Elijah were like in the days while they were here upon the earth. Elijah having the power to shut up the heavens so that it would not rain, and Moses having the power of waters, to turn them to blood; they were witnesses of God's judgments coming upon all false religion in their day. All the succession of ministers, faithful to the truth of the word of God in all the years since the Reformation have borne witness against the false doctrinal system of Roman Catholicism and the Papal authority to perpetrate false doctrine and worship, in particular. The question is; will you?