

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE : SUNDAY 19 JUNE 2011 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Scripture Versification 2-7:1 [Revelation 15:2-4]

Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Psalm of praise: Psalm 47:4

Confession of faith: Nicene

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Scripture versification 15-7:5

Law

Scripture Versification 15-7:5 [Revelation 3:7-13]

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation of the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

Amen

Psalm 49:6

Scripture reading: Revelation 11

Scripture text: Revelation 11:6-8

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.

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.

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.

(Revelation 11:6-8)

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying,

(Revelation 11:1)

This is the only time in Revelation that John received a command to do something himself when the angel told him: **"Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there."**

- The principle is that an honest and true office bearer of the Lord, in his official work to God's Kingdom, is defining the difference between holy and unholy matters.
- He does not occupy himself with senseless, impure and useless matters to the Kingdom of the Lord.

The meaning of this revelation of the Lord having His temple measured up is to indicate that the Lord guards His church.

- He demarcated His chosen and set the limits.
- He guards them within these boundaries so that nothing can interfere with their eternal bliss.

The people, referred here to by the Lord, are those who totally love the Lord – those who, in peril of their lives, worship in the Holy of Holies whilst the heathen are occupying the complete city and rest of the temple!

- This measuring process reveals that the Lord is aware who they are.
- He secures them.

- He guards them.

Indeed, these people are included under God's protection at a place where the others cannot risk entering!

The rest of the command to John entails that there are certain places he may not measure up!

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.

(Revelation 11:2)

Let us get this image into proper perspective:

- What place is mentioned here? The temple of God.
- Who attends the temple? People worshipping the Lord (or pretending to be worshipping the Lord).

With this in mind we listen to the command given by the Lord to John, and then the shock strikes us:

- These temple visitors are heathens! Modernly put: so-called people of the church.
- But God does not regard them as people of the church! He calls them heathens!
- He also does not regard them as visiting the temple to worship God! He says that they are trampling the place!

The Lord clearly reveals that He rejects that part of the visitors to the temple. They are not part of His salvation plan in the Lord Jesus (the Lamb).

- The fact of the Lord not measuring that part of the temple indicates that the Lord does not adopt/accept that part of the temple goes as His property.
- Thus the Lord gives that part of the temple over to the world and decay.

In principle it already was like that when John, as a young man, walked together with the Lord Jesus in the temple! This same John saw it with his own eyes and twice experienced the Lord clearing the temple with a whip. (Once at the start and the next at the end of his service).

The principle behind these dissipated people is that the main aim of the prosecutors is the destruction of the complete church of the Lord on earth.

- Their aim is erasing all traces of the gospel of redemption as if the Lord Jesus was never there and never did any work of reconciliation and redemption.
When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.
(Revelation 11:7)

The Lord put limits to all matters.

- As soon as a matter has served its purpose, the Lord ends it.
- The same is true about the spreading of the gospel. A day will arrive when the Lord will draw a line and declare that it now is enough!
- In this way the scripture text announces that a day will arrive when the witnesses of the Lord have completed their work! Their work has expired.

Our first expectation would be that everybody has heard the gospel and had come to conversion.

- But this is definitely not the case!
- Then the Lord allows the anti-christ to take over – with great numbers from the church following him.

What is the *thing causing the trouble*? The answer: *the remorselessness* of the people.

At that stage the beast coming up out of the abyss will kill the believers. The Lord allows this.

- Then a time of unbounded hatred against the church of the Lord arrives.
- Then the power of the anti-christ overrules the complete world history.

How does the beast manage to take over mankind so easily? The answer is simple: Mankind is on his side!

- Because the Lord then pulls back His mercy this beast easily gets the disloyal believers and heathens under his command.

This beast has immense powers. In the following revelations the Lord renders much attention, so that we may know and distinguish him, to the introduction of who and how the beast is.

The beast is the full working of the satan himself!

- He puts himself in opposition of the true duty to the Lord.
- Therefore it goes without saying that all half believers, false Christians as well as those Christians making their own rules and opposing God will immediately follow satan.
- Because they will be in the majority, the Satan immediately took control.

Something must start telling us that in the forecourt of the heathens (=“believers” or so-called believers) there are people, because they have moved their aim away from the altar of the Lord to the headstrongness of the forecourt of the heathens, no longer coming into the church of the Lord.

- With all the earthly powers now on his side the beast kills all the witnesses of the Lord.
- Then it is the end of the true church on earth.
- Why does the Lord allow that? Because the work of the witnesses have then been completed. Here the Bible teaches that because there will be so few believers left who are still on the proper tract, the Lord will, for their sakes, shorten the days.

The whole world will be glad that at long last the church and its witnesses will be out of the way. The pain caused by the church in awakening the people’s consciences is then no longer existent.

Therefore they do not even bury the believers: **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.**
(Revelation 11:8)

- This points to the inertness remaining where once there was worshippers and worship.

Can you picture yourself a church devoid of any preaching? Because this is what everything is heading towards. It is an open question whether today such churches already do not exist?

With the words *Sodom* and *Egypt* the Bible refers back to the Old Testament.

- It refers to the type of people resident in those places and what they did – their lifestyle and sins!
- Sodom is the symbol of homosexuals and their sins – from there the word **sodomy!**
- Egypt is the symbol of the hell and addiction to and by the sin.

The people eventually breaking away from the church of the Lord – and responsible for the destruction of the church of the Lord are recognizable:

- It is people with dirty morals and abhorrent life values (Sodom)
- They are oppressors of the true believers. They enslave the true believers (Egypt).

The dead is not buried. The symbolic meaning is clear:

- The beast and its followers (the whole world) thereby show that they have no honour or respect towards the Lord.
- They also do not miss the Lord and His rules of life!
- Shamelessly they display the fierceness of their hatred towards God and every believer.

NB. At this stage there will be nobody crying about all the people being killed and just left like that! The most shocking is that all these people will really be devoid of any compassion for their church leaders having been murdered and Christianity exterminated. There will be unknown joy about literary every facet of the church of the Lord that was destroyed!

There is general and total joy because the witnesses of the Lord have been killed (murdered).

- The people would be so glad that they would partake in festivities and giving gifts to each other
- This depicts the state of these people's souls:
 - There is no longer a spiritual link with the Lord.
 - Their interests are embedded into earthly pleasures and lack of morals.
 - There thus is also no aim on heavenly matters.

Then the final judgement arrives. God Himself intervenes. The apostle John sees: **and great fear fell on those who saw them.** (Revelation 11:11)

The believers are resurrected and the others stand there experiencing a great fear: Why are they so terrified?

- Because they think that the people resurrected from death would be taking revenge!
- They fear that the believers would commit the same cruelty and devil's works that they themselves did!
- Because they do not know God and therefore neither His mercy nor grace, they are unable to think differently. All that they knew and sought during their lives was the works and lifestyle of the devil.

Exactly the opposite of what these fearful people expect happens.

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. (Revelation 11:12)

A loud voice from heaven announces that the resurrected believers are to ascend to heaven.

Why are these people taken up to heaven?

- Because God does the same to His chosen than what He did to His Son.
- The Lord Jesus in fact died for us so that we may follow Him in his resurrection and ascension!

Since early in history we know this specific conduct of the Lord. Just think about Enoch!

- God calls His resurrected holy towards Him – but not the bunch of unjust people! They see the separation God makes between the people – and how they remain left behind!
- Therefore their fear deepens – suddenly they understand their own weakness and insignificance facing the One they thought to have completely conquered and exterminated.

The Lord takes the resurrected and the (few) believers left on earth to heaven. In this way we go to meet the Lord. (1Thessalonians 4)

Then comes the last judgement. The most fearful happenings take place. Suddenly the earth is enveloped in destruction and anxiety!

- **...there was a great earthquake,**
- **and a tenth of the city fell..**

The city that fell is the great Babylon. This is the city which, at that stage, is the center point of the anti-christ world power.

The Lord thus causes the power of the anti-christ to fall to pieces – thereby, the moment the Lord arrives, it is over and done with the anti-christ.

Masses of people die.

The rest of the people are literary overwhelmed by fear! They confess God – but out of fear – not to their conversion!

The Lord reveals by this final judgement that He, in all aspects, is Lord, God and King.

16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,

17 saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

(Revelation 11:16, 17)

The worshipping of the elders alternates the song of the singers.

- They are the representatives of the Lord's total congregation – the full holy general Christian church.
- They are the representatives of all the chosen (=saved persons) since creation till this moment of God's final judgement.

See what the elders are doing!

- They alight from their thrones and bow to God!
- They part from any form of government and become total servants to God.
- With the deepest show of respect they start a song of gratitude to the glory of God.

Take note of the compounding of the greatness of the Lord:

- **Lord**
- **God**
- **Almighty**
- **The One who is and who was**
- **and who is to come**
- **You have taken Your great power and reigned.**

The lord has brought His almight to the light by now fully revealing His Kingship.

- By the revelation of His eternal Kingship it is clear that He, in His Godliness, is not created: He is and was.
- By His arrival He destroyed all His haters.

In plain sight of everybody he degenerated the power of the beast (anti-christ) and caused it to disappear, thereby revealing that He rules over it – that He literary rules over everything.

The anger of the nations/heathen culminated into killing the Christians and eradicating the church of the Lord. (Verse 7 onwards)

- They truly believed that thereby they exterminated God!

Then the Lord appeared in His wrath to judge over the dead. The elders confess that the Lord's judgement is in two parts:

- Firstly
 - The servants – prophets – and
 - all the holy and
 - all those who fear the Name of the Lord, receive their wages from the Lord.
- This means that they become sanctified.
 - Literary everybody – small and great – are sanctified.
 - Therefore every possible description of a believer is given.

After that it is short and to the point confessed that the Lord also came to **destroy those who destroy the earth**

- This is a concise description of the angry heathens who are eternally in hell.

All the other matters reveal the fullness of worshipping God.

- The lightning symbolize the unseen holiness of God.
- The voices symbolize the almight of God in His word and commands – but also of the innumerable angels and redeemed people praising and glorifying Him.
- The thunderclaps, earthquakes and hail are the symbols of the power used by God to destroy His haters.

With this revelation the Lord explains that He allows the government of the anti-christ or other power to come into existence, but that He also can nullify it whenever He pleases. By His immeasurable power He thus disposes that He, through the times, will look after His church and grant everlasting sanctification to it.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Song: Scripture Versification 5-4 [Romans 8:33-39]

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give peace.

Amen

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Scripture Modern King James Version**