



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 12:1-5

"A Cameo of the Conflict of the Ages"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning to Revelation chapter 12 and our Scripture reading for today is verse 1 through verse 5. It's helpful to remember that the apostle tells us in the opening of this great book of the apocalypse, that the things that he writes are things that God gave to the Lord Jesus Christ, who in turn has shown them to his servants. So what we are reading is essentially an apocalyptic revelation that comes from the father through the son to the apostles.

Very often we speak as if John said this and John said that, and of course, he did say it in the sense that it was his pen that has given it to us, but it was essentially something that was given to him. And later on that will have some significance in what we are going to say in the message. But in chapter 12 in verse 1 we read,

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven (and if you have a New American Standard Bible, of course, you have the word sign, and that is the correct rendering at this point, so I'll read it that way.); And there appeared a great sign in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another sign in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven

heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. (And notice, of course, when we get to the next chapter that the beast is described in a very similar way, and that's not surprising since the beast is a tool of the dragon. And so, the similarity is probably to be expected. The 4th verse reads,) and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And (and of course you'll notice the important fact that we do not have the term sign here.) And she brought forth a man child (literally in the original text, a son, a male son, or a male), so she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron (You'll recognize that from last Sunday. That is a clause that is taken from the 2nd Psalm and in the 2nd Psalm; the Psalmist describes the ministry of the Messiah in his ultimate rule over the earthy. So it is very clear that the man child is regarded as the Messianic king.): who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

May the Lord bless the reading of his word, and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for the privilege of prayer. We are thankful that we can turn to Thee in all of the experiences of life and know that Thou dost hear our prayers through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We pray for the whole body of Christ today, many of whom are suffering. We pray for them. We ask Thy blessing upon them, and for all of, oh God, give us illumination as we look into Thy word, and give us the motivation and the will to be submissive to the teaching of Holy Scripture.

We thank Thee for the apocalypse, into which we've been looking, and we thank Thee for its great message of hope. We know Lord, that in the divine purpose, that ultimately the purpose of God shall be triumphant and we, through our great covenantal head, the Lord Jesus Christ shall experience the fullness of the redemption that is found in him who shed his blood for sinners' sins.

We ask Thy blessing upon this country. We pray particularly for our president and others associated with him. We ask Thy blessing upon this land. And we ask Thy blessing upon us in the ministry of the word of God. Bless the outreach of Believers Chapel through the radio ministry and through the other forms of outreach, may our Lord be exalted. May the truth of God continue to go forth in accordance with Thy purpose. We pray particularly for the Chapel and its ministry today. Bless in this hour and in the hours that follow. May our Lord be exalted. May we be responsive to Thy truth we pray in Jesus name. Amen

[Message] Sometimes we forget in reading this great apocalypse that we've been studying, that the words that have been given to us, the message, is really a message that comes directly from the Lord God. I notice this particularly in reading commentaries on the Book of Revelation. The authors of the commentaries frequently use such language as, "John is interested in doing this. John is interested in doing that." Sometimes we lose the impact of the opening words which the apostle wrote when he said, "This is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his messenger unto his servant John." So we are to look upon John as one who is communicating for us a message that was given to him. It is helpful at times to avoid the language that the scholarly world likes to use such as, "The apostle has adapted myths that were current in the ancient world, and the apostle has given us this particular great work as a result of the adaptation of these myths."

For example, in one of the commentaries, a very important one on the Book of Revelation, there is a statement to the effect that this is probably one of the most puzzling episodes in the revelation, and that is a legitimate comment. But the author goes on to say that this is "proved by the fact that what we have here is a scene based upon the myth of a divine child, including some astral speculation." In other words, what John

supposedly has done is to give us something that was rather wide spread in the ancient world, the myth of a divine child whose destruction is sought by those whose power he threatens. And this myth is coupled with some speculation concerning the stars. The reference is made to the Greek story of the birth of Apollo by Zeus through Leto who was pursued by the dragon Python, and then the story of the birth of Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, Egyptian gods. And there are others too who had similar stories.

Now it may be true, that the Lord God has framed the revelation in such a way as to give a lie to the ancient myths, but it wasn't John the Apostle who did it, it was the Lord God, if that's the purpose that is accomplished by this great book. This is a very puzzling part of the Book of Revelation. Another commentator has said, "This suggests the emergence of woman into a new place of significance." Now Christianity has certainly given woman a place which she never had in the ancient world, and the same may be said of the world so far as it has been effected by Christianity, but there doesn't seem to be any reason why this particular chapter is one in which the emergence of woman is given a new place of significance, as I think we shall see.

There is one thing that we must keep in mind, and that is that the Book of Revelation is a book in which symbols figure largely. I know there are lots of teachers who like to say we ought to read the Bible literally. Now, that's not a very good word, because it's misunderstood by a lot of people. If you were to say we were to read the Bible according to normal meanings of words and phrases and clauses, I would go along with that. I think that is reasonable and that is what we should expect. But when the author tells us he has given us a revelation with the use of symbol, then we must find the symbols and interpret them in accordance with principles that emerge from the book itself for the interpretation of symbols. And without going into detail over it at this point, one of the fundamental things to keep in mind is that the symbols of the Book of Revelation are first and foremost largely taken from Old Testament Scriptures, which were the

Scriptures for the apostles at this time and the Scriptures for all who would read the Book of Revelation at this time. So we'll bare that in mind.

Now, careful hermeneutics or principles of interpretation, is surely important here. What we have is an instance of *husterologia*. Now that's I know, very plain and clear to you, but those are two Greek words put together, one that means "later" and one means "discourse" essentially. So that events that are written later are events that precede events that are previously given in the book, events that are written later preceded those that have been previously described.

For example, in chapter 6 we have the judgments of the seals, and then later, the judgments of the trumpets. Now these, we have said, and commentators who are biblical largely agree that these are judgments that pertain to the future. But now we have something that actually, though written after those judgments, is something that refers to a matter that occurred before those judgments come to pass. They have not come to pass yet. So we have in a sense an outward view of things in chapter 6 and following through chapter 11, the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments and now we look at the inward view of those things going back to the causes of the conflicts. For example in chapter 11, in verse 7 we read, "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." Perhaps one of the early readers of the apocalypse might have stopped at this point and should have said, "The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit? We haven't been told about any beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit." It is not until the next chapter actually, that fuller information is given concerning the beast.

So now we are going to look at matters that go back, actually, to fundamental things of the Scriptures, what is to us the Old Testament, as well as facts that are recorded in the New Testament in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our

Lord Jesus Christ. What we also find here, I think, is the origin and the overthrow of anti-Semitism.

Now we know that anti-Semitism is something that has characterized the human race since the time of the elective action of God. One can go back to the Abrahamic promises, follow the flow of them through the word of God, and one will find that those who are not in the elect people of God have resented it, have fought against them, have sought to persecute them and actually kill them if possible. We see it even in the case of Ishmael and Isaac. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," the Scriptures say. Ishmael did not like it, according to tradition shot arrows at Isaac. And the conflict that is characterized by those who are not of the elective purpose of God, apparently, with those who are is a conflict that we still have with us today. It reached its climax in the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, but the conflict still continues.

Fifty years ago *Fortune Magazine* had an article, I was a little boy at that time you understand, but fifty years ago in *Fortune Magazine*, *Fortune Magazine* named fifty anti-Semitic organizations at that time. If we really could look at organizations today, the chances are that we would have even more.

But now, let's turn to the passage; we're going to see some things that bear on that topic as we seek to expound these verses. Now the apostle tells us in verses 1 and 2 of the first sign in heaven. "And there appeared a great sign in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." Now the first thing we need to know is the meaning of the term sign. There are different ways in which the New Testament speaks of the miraculous. Sometimes words are used that express simply, "It's a miracle." It's contrary to what we would regard as natural law. And then at other times words are used that have particular emphasis upon the effects of the miraculous. In other words, they can be translated by words like "wonder," things that produce astonishment.

And then, this particular word that is used here is a favorite Johannine word in the sense that it is very important in his gospel. In the gospel, you'll remember that John says that he selected a number of signs that is miracles that had spiritual significance and constructed his gospel around them. That is the term that is used here. It's a term for a miracle that has spiritual significance. So, "there appeared a great sign" indicates to us right at the beginning that there is a deeper meaning than simply "a woman clothed with a sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." We should expect these things to mean something, and as a matter of fact, that is the important thing for the revelation.

He says it's a great sign, and that suggests the vast importance of this sign. One can, if you read the whole story about ancient Israel, can understand that thoroughly right from the beginning. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy chapter 32 in verse 8, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam; he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." So, in other words, Israel is the key national entity to the Bible and the revelation that is contained within it. If one is a Gentile, one of the things that we must learn to do is to follow Scripture and submit to it, and not be upset over it and fight against it, because it's a battle you and I will always lose. But it also is something from which we shall gain if we submit to the word of God, for in the fundamental premises that God made to the patriarch Abraham, he said, "Abraham in thee, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So Gentiles find their blessings through the Abrahamic covenants as well they just find it in a different way. That will come out as one continues to read the Bible.

The first question that we ask ourselves as we read this here is who is the woman? Well it has been suggested by some, for obvious reasons, that the woman is the Virgin Mary. We know our Lord was born of the Virgin Mary, so it would be natural for some to suggest that the woman is the Virgin Mary. The only thing, however, that supports that is

her motherhood. Actually, as we shall read on through this chapter, this woman continues on this earth until the end, and so it cannot be the Virgin Mary.

Others have suggested that the woman is not a specific woman or even a reference to a nation, but rather to a system of teaching. So we are to regard the woman as a system of teaching. Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy said that the woman was Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy [laughter] and that the man child was her teaching and that the dragon was mortal mind. Now we know the dragon is said to be Satan in this context, and we know of course, that Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy is not the woman, because the dragon does not get the woman of Revelation chapter 12, although the dragon did get Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy. [Laughter] That goes out over the radio, and I know there'll be some smiles out there too, and maybe a letter or two back. Who can tell?

Others have said this is a reference to the church, but now we remember as we sing in our own hymns. When we sing for example, "The Church's One Foundation," we do not sing according to that. When we read "The Church's One Foundation" in our hymn book, the first stanza says, "The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. She is his new creation by water and the word. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride. With his own blood he bought her and for her life he died." In other words, the church is his creation, not he her creation. Now let us not forget that.

So we come to a more common interpretation, and I think one that has more truth to it, and that is that the woman is designed to represent the nation Israel. The very way in which the woman is described suggests this. Back in Genesis chapter 37 and the story of Joseph, in verse 9 and 10 we read,
"And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to Jacob his father, and to his brethren: and his father

rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

So the moon and the eleven stars that made obeisance to Joseph are defined by Jacob as a reference to him and to his brethren. So that figure, that symbolic language, is extremely suggestive of the Nation of Israel. We know in the Old Testament that Isaiah, in the 9th chapter, and the 6th verse of his great prophecy, this one is one of the greatest of the Messianic prophecies, he says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." He means unto us, the nation, a child is born. Unto us a son is given. "And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." So in that sense we can say that our Lord came from Israel. He was of the seed of David according to the flesh. So, it seems to me, we put other passages together aside from that one, that we therefore are justified in interpreting the woman as a reference to the Nation Israel.

You will notice, too, in the 2nd verse it is said that she cried because she was pregnant and she travailed in birth and was in pain to be delivered. Now the birth of the Messiah was the object of Israel's hope. In the Old Testament, those who were students of the word of God looked forward to the coming of the Messianic king, who they thought would bring the kingdom that had been promised to them. Now that birth, therefore, as the object of Israel's hope was something over which they struggled, and over which also they suffered through the years. The subject of the prophets was the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Read the highlight in Isaiah 52:13 through chapter 53, in verse 12. The expectant attitude together with the persecution of the remnant is, I think, suggested by the apostle here as he gives the revelation from God. "She being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

Then in the next two verses, the second sign is mentioned, and we read in verse 3, "And there appeared another sign in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." Now the identity of this

sign is rather easy to see. The fact that this is a red dragon suggests the murderous attitude of the dragon. The fact that he is wise and all powerful particularly is suggested by the ten horns. For the horn was a symbol in the Old Testament in many places, of strength and power particularly.

And furthermore we know that he was an earthly ruler that is an angelic being, but an earthly ruler. Jesus called him the prince of this world, so when we read "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head," we, I think, are surely correct in saying that this is a reference to Satan ultimately. Now, it's striking that in the very next chapter the beast is described in very similar language, as one might expect, because the beast is a tool of the dragon.

Now, when we talk about the dragon, we are talking about a spiritual being. We are not talking about an influence. We are not talking about the spirit of negation, as Satan has sometimes been called. We are not talking about a being like Goethe's Mephistopheles. We are talking about the dragon. In our day, it is very unpopular for anyone to think of the devil as being a personal being, and especially being a personal being of great power. In fact, we like to make fun of the devil.

There was a little stanza that I liked. "The devil was fairly voted out, and of course, the devil's gone, but simple would like to know, who carries his business on." He is here with us, and if we read and study the word of God, we cannot take the devil lightly. He is alive, and he goes about seeking whom he may devour. He is a powerful angelic being to whom God has given great freedom, even in this day.

In *Robinson Crusoe* you may remember that Crusoe was giving his man Friday, some instructions in the doctrines of the Christian faith, and at length he came to the devil. And when he came to the devil, he told him how the devil, who was God's enemy in the hearts of men, used all his malice and skill to defeat the good designs of providence, and to ruin the kingdom of Christ in the world. Whereupon, Friday, whose English was not all that good, but very pithy, asked him, "Is God not as strong as the

devil?" And Crusoe answered that "God was stronger than the devil and above the devil and therefore we pray to God to tread him under our feet." "But," rejoined Friday, "Why God no kill the devil so make him no more do wicked?"

Well, Crusoe hadn't thought about that question, so he reacted like professors in theological seminaries. He reacted as if he hadn't heard the question. [Laughter] That's the first thing you do in order to gain some competence in the theological seminary, act like you didn't hear the question. Now, if the student asks the question again, ask him to repeat it a couple of times while you are trying to think up some answer on the spur of the moment. But Crusoe was hard put, and so in order to gain time he pretended he hadn't heard Friday, and asked him what he said hoping he might forget the question. But Friday repeated the question, and this time Crusoe answered that at the last Satan would be punished, that he was reserved for the judgment of the bottomless pit, and he would be cast there finally. "But," asked Friday, "why not kill the devil now, not kill great ago?" In other words, "Kill him now, not wait until the time of the bottomless pit." Well, Crusoe was unable to answer that question, and it's a question that very few people today can answer until they've thought about what the Scriptures say. Actually, God has a distinct purpose for the existence and the work of the devil, and he will be here until specifically those times set forth in the word of God, and he will carry out his purpose. Because his purpose is God's purpose, that is, it's God's purpose that his purpose should be carried out and ultimately defeated. So the devil then is the great red dragon.

We read in the 4th verse that his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven. Now the stars of heaven, we do know that in this book even a star is sometimes used as a symbol of an angelic being, and this is probably a reference to the first rebellion in which Satan, having fallen into sin carries a great number of the angelic beings with him. So that we know, there are elect angels and there are non-elect angels. In other words, in heaven they know about the doctrine of election also, and the angelic beings know that there are such a thing as elect angels and non-elect angels.

And furthermore, so far as we know, the non-elect angels do not have any possibility of redemption through the work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ such as we have through the gospel. Now if you want to know more about that, I suggest you read those great chapters in the Old Testament such as Ezekiel chapter 28 and Isaiah chapter 14. Those are typical chapters speaking about Lucifer and about the king of Tyre in typical form, but it's obvious they speak beyond themselves and have significance for the original fall of Satan in heaven. Incidentally, there are some allusions to the fall of the stars of heaven when he fell in other passages, for example, in the Book of Daniel.

Now we read in the 4th verse that after we read, "His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: that the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." That word stand here is a word that suggests taking one's stand and then continuing there. So he stood there. In fact, that's a very intensive way of saying stand. The tense of this particular verse suggests that fact. So we have a picture of the devil standing and awaiting the birth of the child in order that he might destroy the child that was to be born of the woman. That's a very, very vivid picture of what Satan has sought to do down through the centuries, to do anything that he possibly can to thwart the purpose of God in the coming and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he has been defeated, and he will always be defeated at every move that he makes, that God wishes to see him defeated again.

Go back in the Bible and read some of the things that are found in the word of God. Perhaps the first great attempt, although this is a very difficult passage to interpret, is the attempt that may have been made in Genesis chapter 6, in verse 2 where Satan strove to corrupt the whole of mankind. He succeeded so far that only one family was uncontaminated and that was Noah's family. He was perfect in his generations. That's a word that means something like, "without blemish." His line had not been tarnished.

It refers to what might be called genital perfection, and the term generation there is a term that has, I think, justification for saying that. But at any rate, so vast was the corruption from the eruption of evil angels that the whole race, if that's the correct interpretation of Genesis 6, had to be destroyed. Noah and his three sons were alone pure from the awful defilement. That's why it was said that Noah was perfect in his generations. Nothing but divine interposition saved the race and preserved mankind from total overthrow, and in Shem, one of Noah's sons remember, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, in Shem the line of the seed of the woman was continued and the promise of Eden was preserved. That's a questionable event. I've give you one interpretation of it, there are other interpretations.

But the second great attempt that I refer to is one that we can be sure of. Pharaoh sought to destroy the male children of Israel at their birth, because he said he did not want them to grow strong in order that they might deliver themselves from the bondage in Egypt. And so his object was that they might not get out of Egypt. His object, Satan's object was to destroy the male line all together, thus make the birth of the seed of the woman impossible. Again, divine interposition defeated Satan's plans. It was a spiritual conflict in which heaven and hell were taking part all along. The same conflict that we see here in Revelation chapter 12, but it's written, God takes the wise in their own craftiness. And what Pharaoh said was, "Egypt's wisdom will destroy the males, will keep them a subservient nation."

But now, here's the great Egyptian Pharaoh, the greatest king of his day, the greatest emperor of the greatest empire, frustrated by what? A baby's tear, by a baby's tear. That's all. For when Moses was born and placed in the ark, and put in the bulrushes by Moses' mother with his sister looking, who should come but Pharaoh's daughter and open the ark of bulrushes, saw the child within, heard the child crying. We read, "The baby wept, and she had compassion on him." Think of that, a tear, a cry, and the mighty Pharaoh is defeated in his purpose. So Pharaoh's great wisdom ended up

having to board Moses, lodge Moses, bring up Moses, and even educate him. So he was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and prepared for the work of delivering the children of Israel from the Egyptians, which Pharaoh the great king sought to prevent, but nevertheless did it unwittingly. That's providence, that's divine providence. That's not all.

There's another special and determined attempt of Satan to break up the royal line. Described in 2 Chronicles 21 and 22, on the death of Jehoshaphat his son Jehoram made a beginning. He wanted to serve his own purposes of course, so he slew his brethren with the sword. So the royal line was reduced to himself. He alone was the royal line, but he had children, and of these we read that the Arabians came up against Judah and slew all of his sons so that there was never a son left him save Ahaziah, the youngest of his sons. You can just see the Holy Spirit saying, "Be careful to read the whole sentence." Save Ahaziah, who is the youngest of his sons. That is an emphatic word from the Holy Spirit, everybody slain but the one. So Ahaziah was the only lineal descendent from whom the royal line and the royal king should come, the seed of the woman through David, Abraham and Shem

But Ahaziah had children and as a result, they in turn were slain by that beautiful lady Athaliah, lovely character. No emergence of woman there, except in the worst sense. So Athaliah destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah, that's what she meant to do and would have done, had not God again divinely interposed and rescued the infant from among, Scripture says, the king's sons that were slain. And for six years all of the hopes of God's people rested on that one young child's life, Jehoash. Nothing could happen to that child, because from him the Messiah should come. All the faithfulness of God depended on that one life, marvelous story.

And of course, we go on to the New Testament, the same thing is true. The faithfulness of Jehovah to his word, nothing but divine interposition frustrates the designs of Satan, and through it we see the mighty power of a merciful and kind God who is never frustrated in any of his divine purposes. Please remember that. If you do not have

a God who is never frustrated in any of his divine purposes, your God is not the God of Scripture, so far as Scripture reveals him. I am not suggesting you are worshiping a false God, but your conception of God is severely limited.

Now when we come to the New Testament, well we talk about the Book of Esther, magnificent book written around the subject of the providence of God. And so we have the wicked Haman seeking to destroy Mordecai, and the nation, and in fact he's so sure that it's going to take place that he constructs a gallows. And when he comes in and asks the king, not knowing that the king had been one night afflicted with royal insomnia and didn't have anything to read, there was no *Time* magazine around, so he began to read the annals of the nation, and he found there that Mordecai had done something that was very significant for him. So he asked Haman, "What's been done for a man who's done this?" And Haman thinks, "of course, it's he." So, he says, "Nothing was done." The king says something like, Ahasuerus says something like, "What should be done?"

So Haman really loves that, so he just manufactures exactly what he would like to have, talks about how the king should honor him, and can imagine himself in that chariot being honored by all of the people. The king had in mind Mordecai. He had himself in mind, and as you know ultimately Haman is hung on the gallows that he constructed for Mordecai, and the children of Israel are not only delivered, but are exalted in the land.

When we come to the New Testament and Herod seeks to destroy the male children, what follows? Well, the same thing follows. He found out that the child was to be born in Bethlehem. He found out the time the star appeared, and so he thought that by slaying all of the children from two years old, that he would accomplish his purpose of preventing the king of the Jews from coming to his throne. Again, heaven interfered and defeated his plans. The suggestion of Satan that Christ should throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, the attempt of the people of Nazareth to cast him down from the brow of the hill described in Luke 4, the two storms on the Sea of Galilee possibly

were attempts of Satan. And when he saw him on the cross, and laid in the sepulcher, and the stone sealed the sepulcher, and the watch was set, he thought, like Haman thought that his prey was within his grasp. But then he discovered that there was something else God had in mind. So God raised him from the dead, the child was caught up to God and his throne, and the purposes of the evil one are defeated, always are, according to the word of God.

Well, one can go on and read in Scripture of how this is accomplished in the saving ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, but what we can say about this is this, Satan is the first hater of the Jews and perhaps the most significant one from the beginning. He's the author of anti-Semitism which is caused by divine election, and we don't like, naturally, divine election. The world doesn't like divine election; they manifest it in different way.

I wish I had time to read statements from even things like Britannica concerning that. One looks at the history of our modern world from the time of the Dreyfus Affair, one of the greatest incidences of individual anti-Semitism, go back over the history of Assyria and Britain and Germany, and when nations persecute the children of Israel, inevitably they suffer. That was in the original promise that God made to Abraham. Hermann Goering, some of us heard, some of us who are old enough, maybe in our forties, some of us heard Hermann Goering in World War II say that, "The world someday will thank Hitler for anti-Semitism." How wrong Goering was. British Israelism is a heresy grounded in that doctrine of anti-Semitism that is a satanic heresy.

Now of course it's important to distinguish national election and the national view of the nation of Israel and individual views of Jewish individuals. Jewish individuals are like Gentile individuals. Their destiny is related to their response to the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but as a nation they have a future set forth in the word of God. The promises are directed to an ultimate national restoration.

Twenty-five years ago I was in Santa Barbara for some meetings and I was staying with a man by the name of Dan Sherman, I have not maintained contact with Dan, but he

had just returned from a vacation. He told me had an interesting contact in Palm Springs where he had spent his vacation with an eighty-two year old Jewish man. He said they were in the swimming pool together, they struck up a conversation and Mr. Sherman was an ardent evangelical and he sought to introduce the conversation into gospel thought. So he witnessed to him of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ultimately he had to tell him for the Scriptures say that there is no hope for him, if when Christ came again he was not a believer in him. He said the man replied to him, "If Christ were to come again, we Jews would crucify him again." Well now that reflects an individual view point. I wouldn't want to say that any Jewish man that I know of would say anything like that, but when we talk about individual salvation, we all stand on the same plain. But Israel has a national future.

In the fifth verse we have that which is not a sign, and John says, "And she brought forth a man child (that is a son, a male), who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." The man child or the son, a male as the original text puts it, is surely our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Scriptures that have to do with the Messiah are applied to him right here, he is to rule the nations with a rod of iron, that was said of the Messiah in Psalm chapter 2. We looked at that last week. "And her child was caught up," now isn't it strange that the earthly life and death of our Lord is omitted here. It doesn't say anything about his life and ministry and his death and his burial and resurrection, but simply that he was born and caught up to heaven.

Well, I suggest that that's due to two things. First, John is interested in showing the triumphant consummation of human history through the son. He says in the 5th chapter that this Son has prevailed. And he is interested, secondly, not in the human Jesus of Nazareth, but he is interested most in the divine Lord of heaven. The event includes the death as its cardinal feature in verses 10 through 12. In the following context he will talk about how they have overcome by the blood of the lamb. So he's not

denying the other, he's simply not speaking of that at this point. In other words, he moves from his birth to his ascension and his triumphant power at the right hand of the throne of God. The birth is not what interests him at this point; it's the consequences of his birth and the ministry that follows that that is important to him.

Our time is up. I need to say one thing only. If Satan is so determined to thwart the word of God and the gospel message involved in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, then the gospel must be extremely important. Is that not true? If Satan is so concerned to thwart the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus, that tells me that you and I are in the presence of something that is of ultimate importance for everyone of the spirits and souls that are in this auditorium and as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his name I call upon you in the light of the word of God to acknowledge your sin. It's plainly set forth in the word of God, to acknowledge him as the supreme son and savior of men, and flee to him for your salvation while there is still time.

May God in his marvelous grace speak to your heart and enable you to do that. That's something you do personally. You do not do it for yourself and someone else, you do it for yourself. Your children, who are in this auditorium, must themselves respond to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the members of your family must respond individually. You cannot be the Savior of them. May God in his grace turn you to Christ. No better time than right now. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful that Thou hast in great loving kindness given us the message concerning Christ, for we so need it. We are sinners. We stand under the judgment of God naturally. The wrath of God abides upon all of us naturally. We pray that by Thy grace Thou will speak to the hearts of every individual here, young and old, and may they, if they have never turned to Thee through Christ, may they at this very moment say, "Lord I thank Thee for the Savior who died for sinners. I am a sinner. I

need him. I lean upon him and him alone for my eternal salvation." For Jesus sake.

Amen.