



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 12:6-12

"War in Heaven"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are, as you know, attempting to expound this great apocalypse, the Book of Revelation. And today our Scripture reading is verse 6 through verse 12 of chapter 12. So if you have your Bibles with you, turn to chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation, and we'll read verse 6 through verse 12. The apostle writes,

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." (You probably know that later on in this chapter, and in this book, we have the expression times, time, and half a time, which is a reference to three and a half years. Well, the twelve hundred and sixty days are also three and a half years.) "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now," (Incidentally, in the Greek language used in the New Testament, there are two words used for now, one of them referring to now in a general sense, now like this age, now is the age of the automobile. And then a

now which means something like at the moment. Well the latter is the word that is used here. And so we are to think of this moment or something very close to that. And we read at this moment) "is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Messiah: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

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

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we give Thee thanks for the word of God. And particularly Lord for the apocalypse and for the light that thou hast given to us regarding the future. We thank Thee and praise Thee for the unfolding of the great principles that have to do with our human existence and at the ultimate consummation of them in the history of the human race.

We especially give the thanks for him whose blood has made it possible for us to have the assurance of everlasting life, for the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, and for the assurance of a satisfaction that has satisfied the claims of a holy and righteous God against us. For this Lord we are deeply grateful. We give Thee the praise that is due thy name. We thank Thee for our triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and for the way in which thou hast unfolded the activities of our triune God in our behalf. How marvelous it is to know that we stand within his saving purpose and power.

We pray Thy blessing upon the whole church of Jesus Christ today, not simply those who meet here with us, but who may meet in other Christian churches where Christ

is honored and exalted. We pray for each one of them, we pray for the whole body of Christ. We look forward to the day when it is complete and we shall enjoy Thy presence under the ages of the ages of eternity.

We pray, Lord, for the sick, and especially those who have requested our prayers for them. We pray for them. We pray for those who normally meet with us, but who are suffering. O God, be with them. Strengthen them and build them up, and encourage them and give healing as it would please Thee. Bless their families, the physicians who minister to them. And Father, we pray for the ministry of the chapel and its outreach. We pray for the elders and deacons, and for the members. We pray for the friends who are here today. May Thy blessing rest upon all of the ministry and its outreach, the Bible classes, the radio ministry, the written ministry, and other ways in which Christ has made known.

Help us Lord individually to give the word of our testimony like those of whom John writes in this 12th chapter, who overcame by the word of their testimony. Bless the testimony of the believers here to the salvation and building up of others. Be with us as we sing and as we have Christian fellowship together, as we listen to thy word, may we be responsive to it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today as we turn to the continued exposition of the Book of the Revelation is war in heaven. This, the 12th chapter, is one of the most important biblical chapters for insight into the ages long conflict between God and Satan. In a nutshell, one has almost the whole history of the warfare. The struggle began in heaven, and we read in the 4th verse, "And the dragons tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven," evidently a reference to his original fall when inequity was found in him and when he became the occasion of the fall of the non-elect angels about which we read in the Bible. It is continued, that is the struggle in both heaven and earth. In the 6th and 7th verses, we read of the woman fleeing to the wilderness. We will point out that that is

a reference to the continuation of the struggle on earth. And then in the 7th verse, we read the statement, "There was war in heaven," Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon.

So the conflict is continued in heaven and earth, and then comes to the earth with a vengeance in Israel's seventieth week. The seventieth week, of which is divided into two parts, the first three and a half years of relative peace, and the last three and a half years which our Lord calls, "great tribulation." There we read of some of the things that we find right here in verse 8 through verse 18 when the devil and the angels prevail not in the warfare in heaven their place was no longer found in heaven and he and his own are cast into the earth. The final victory of our Lord over Satan and his angels is not given in detail in the 12th chapter, but the certainty of it is sung by the brethren, for we read in the 10th and 11th verses,

"Now is come the salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Messiah: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

So, we know from that, though the details are not given that the warfare ultimately ends in the victory of the Lord God and the defeat of Satan and his angels.

Now, coming specifically to the content of chapter 12, in our last study, we saw that the apostle saw two signs. One described in verse 1 of the chapter, "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," we have identified this as a symbolic representation of the nation Israel, the symbols going back to Genesis chapter 37, and the reference to Joseph and Jacob and the events of that particular chapter. Then second sign, he saw, in verse 3, "another sign in heaven and behold a great red dragon," we have no difficulty in identifying that sign because we are told here in verse 9, "the great dragon was cast out,

that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan." So the two signs, the sign of the woman and the sign of the dragon are references to Israel and Satan.

He then in the 5th verse saw a woman give birth to a son, now this is not called a sign. This son is a male, specifically John says, a male, in order to make the identification plain and clear. The son is caught up to heaven after birth to God and his thrown. We are perhaps surprised that nothing is said of the earthly life of the son. Nothing said of his life, his death, his burial, his resurrection, but simply after the reference to his birth, he is caught up to heaven.

Now the reason, and this of course is not stated specifically, but the reason that this is so is probably the vision centers on the triumphant consummation of the human history and the son, or of human history in the son. And so consequently, the reference to his death, burial and resurrection is not necessary at this point. However, John and the one who gave him the Revelation, our Lord himself, as we pointed out last week, knows of the earthly life and the death because we read here in verse 11, "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and they loved not their lives unto the death." So, there is no total omission of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord, but the important thing is the consummation, triumphant consummation, of human history in the son.

There is another thing that we need to keep before us as we think about the nation Israel and the future that lies before them. And it is the statement that is made by our Lord when Abraham was given his great promises. These promises, we have said more than once, are the fundamental promises of the word of God. They go all the way back to the first Book of the Bible, and Genesis chapter 12. The Lord said to Abraham, Moses wrote, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:" "A land," how important that is, ultimately, the nation as a whole shall poses it.

Now I have friends who will say, but the land promises are not mentioned in the New Testament. The early church would have regarded that as a great perversity, a kind

of objection like that. The early church's Bible was not the New Testament. The early church's Bible was the Old Testament, the Scriptures, the thirty-nine Books of the Old Testament. That was their Bible. That is what they went by when they preached the Gospel. They used the Scriptures of the Old Testament, not New Testament.

Now all will grant, even misguided people who make statement like that, all will grant that the Old Testament is full of promises concerning the land. So it was not necessary for them to continue to repeat things which are so often found in the Old Testament. The proper way to interpret the Bible is not to reject everything that is not mentioned in the New, but rather to reject things that the New Testament specifically says have not been abrogated. And we hold to the things of the Old Testament unless there is abrogation of them because that was their Scripture. So let us not raise the objection the land promise if not significant because it's mentioned only in the Old Testament. It's mentioned over, and over, and over again and that Bible is the Bible of the apostles, as they preached the word of God.

Now the promise to which I wanted to come is the promise that begins the 1st verse of verse 3 of Genesis chapter 12 for there we read, after God has said, "I will make of thee (Abraham) a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." That is a great national principal of the word of God, and it finds illustration right here in Revelation chapter 12. I read, I think last week, the statement from the Encyclopedia Britannica, which so far as I know was not written by people who were members of fundamental churches and in the encyclopedia, the fourteenth edition, one will find these statements. "It is a note worthy fact of history that great conquerors, Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon, have always treated the Jews well.

On the other hand, lesser men endowed with narrower outlooks have failed to recognize the Jew and have sought to crush him. But such methods are contrary to nature and tyranny, whether towards Jew or towards any other and have never secured

permanent results. The same policy of religious unifications characterizes subsequent dynasties from the Assyrians to the Romanovs and the same fate has overtaken them. The Jew has survived their disappearance. One can look back over human history and see a number of illustrations of this. One of the earliest of the great nations was the nation of Assyria. That empire, a world empire, fell apart because of persecution of the Jew. Persia, which became a great empire under Cyrus the Great and Artaxerxes Longimanus. They were especially kind to the Jews and that includes also Darius the Second, and their greatness can be traced to the way in which they dealt with the Jew.

Greece under Alexander the Great treated the Jew with great courtesy giving them administrative and executive positions throughout the empire. When Alexander's empire disintegrated and was then fell into the hands of four of his generals, two of those generals established empires in which there was persecution of the Jew, and it was not long before their empires were gone.

Spain, which for centuries was a haven for the Jews, prospered and became a worldwide power. Then Ferdinand the Second and Isabella came to power under the influence of Tomas de Torquemada, the Spanish Catholic churchman and inquisitor. He became their confessor and in 1483 was appointed Inquisitor General of Casteele and Aragon, charged with the centralization of the Spanish Inquisition. He was largely instrumental of bringing about the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. His reputation for cruelty is traced to the harsh rules of procedure that he devised for the Inquisition and to the rigor with which he carried them out. Spain from that time began its long decline in world power. And its end came about 100 years later when the defeat of Phillip the Second's armada by the English took place. He had hoped to overthrow the Protestant Elizabeth the First and establish himself on the English throne.

Britain opened the doors for the Jews by Cromwell in 1655. They were given citizenship and the same privileges as any other Brittan. In Queen Victoria's day, as you know, a Jewish man, though not a Jew by religion because he had effectively converted

to Christianity, Benjamin Disraeli became Prime Minister. Baron Rothschild was seated in the British parliament. The sun never set on the Union Jack in those days. And at the close of World War I, Britain, under the Balfour Declaration of 1917, officially went on record and favoring and pledging British support for a national homeland in Palestine for the Jew, with the proviso that the rights of the non-Jewish communities would be respected.

Since then, there has been something of a retreat from that position. It's rather startling when you look at British history in the light of that for as you know World War I was the climax of the power of Britain. But by the time that the decline began to take place, and then when World War II came to pass Britain was no longer top dog among the nations. In fact, in one humorous history of England, *1066 and All That*, that little book written by two college students, ends with the statement that, "History ended with World War II because Britain was no longer the top nation."

Germany's actions, of course, under Hitler are well known to us and the results of their attitude toward the Jews.

The United States of America, incidentally, when this country was discovered, that was just about the precise time that Tomas de Torquemada brought about the expulsion of the Jews in the 15th Century, at the end of it. The Declaration of Independence, in the 18th Century, is perhaps the greatest document, outside the Bible, for protecting the Jews. Anti-Semitism, if practiced, will destroy us as well.

When Hermann Goering said, as I mentioned last Sunday, "The world someday will thank Hitler for Anti-Semitism. We thank Mr. Goering for the statement because it illustrates so perfectly that if we persist in anti-Semitism, the promise that God gave to Abraham and to those who belong to Abraham's seed still holds true. He blesses those who bless the seed of Abraham. He curses those who curse the seed of Abraham. We are not set apart from the nations. We too are responsible to be submissive to the Revelation God gave to Abraham

Now, we turn to our passage, and we notice in the 6th verse, the flight of the woman. John writes, "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Now, this little text ends, or begins, with an "and." "And the woman fled into the wilderness." But all the evidence of the prophetic word points to an interval between verse 5 and verse 6. Let me point out how one can discern that even in this chapter. This verse begins "And the woman fled into the wilderness." You might think, if you read it carelessly, that "and the woman fled into the wilderness" takes place precisely after the birth of the man child described in verse 5.

Now we don't have time to talk about other passages in the Bible where we have these intervals between statements in the Bible. That's a well known fact. Our Lord, himself, uses the Old Testament in that way and establishes the principle in Luke chapter 4. But I want you to notice here that we read in verse 13, well let me read verse 12 first, "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." In other words, that statement is a reference to something that transpires just a short time before the consummation of things in the Second Advent of our Lord and the institution of the Kingdom of God. If that is true, then when we read in verse 13, "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." This is set in the future, and the woman is there, the mother of the man child.

We can only conclude from comparing those passages that when we read in verse 6, "and the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared of God that they should feed her there for the three and a half years." That too is a reference to that which is going to happen in the future. It's clear from the time. It's clear from the fact that the dragon persecutes the woman, and it's clear from the woman fleeing. So, the fled is written from the standpoint of the beasts breaking of the covenant described in Daniel

chapter 9 ushering in the last half of Israel's seventieth week, in other words, the last half of the history of the nation upon the earth before the establishment of the kingdom.

Now, another thing we note from this 6th verse, it says, "the woman fled into the wilderness." Where that is we, of course, we do not know. It is true that, in 66 A.D., the Palestinian church fled under persecution to Pella, and it is also true that Pella has been identified by archeologists as Petra, and we know that that city is a city, which incidentally, the tourists visit, filled with caves. And it's possible the place prepared is Petra.

At any rate, W. E. Blackstone, who wrote the very famous book *Jesus is Coming*, read by many, many evangelical Christians in the earlier part of the 20th century, Mr. Blackstone, who founded a Jewish missionary society, that is a missionary society to Jewish people in behalf of Christianity, thought so certainly that Petra was the place where the remnant, believing remnant of Israel, in the future, would flee that he secured thousands of Bibles, took them to the land, went to Petra, hid them in the caves of Petra because he was convinced that at that time, those Jewish people who fled would find those Bibles and through them come to faith in Christ.

In fact, Mr. Blackstone's theory was, as I remember it, that perhaps this is how the one hundred and forty-four thousand are converted, or sealed as we read in chapter 7. Whether that's true or not, of course, we don't know. But one thing is true about this. It's characteristic of Christianity, and characteristic of believing Israelites in the Old Testament to be persecuted for the truth. So, I'm not surprised that we read in verse 6, "and the woman fled into the wilderness" because all who give themselves to the Lord God, eventually, suffer persecution.

In the Christian era, it is, of course, very obvious. We go back to individuals like Chrysostom, John Chrysostom -- Golden Mouth -- the great early Christian who was persecuted in several different places, John Calvin, who was persecuted in several different places, John Knox, whose life was almost one life of persecution, Robert Bruce

in Scotland, James Renick and others, the Covenanters as a whole. What you have in history is the story of the persecution of believing Christians, and we still have it today. The kind of persecution today is, generally speaking, not the physical persecution. It's the scorn and the other ways in which the world treats believing individuals. So, when we read, "the woman fled into the wilderness," well we can understand that that's true to the experiences of believing men.

And further, there she has a place prepared of God, providential provision, just like Elijah when he made his pronouncement to Ahab and immediately had to flee. God told him to go to the Brook Cherith, there he would be fed by ravens. Ravens don't even care for their young. That's characteristic of them. But, when they are under the hand of a sovereign God, they care for the prophet, and so he was fed by the ravens. And finally when the brook Kerith dried up, then God spoke to the prophet and said go over to Zarephath, there is a widow there, and she'll take care of you. And God cares for his own. This will be a place prepared for them. Like Israel and the manna, God will take care of his people. We experience that too, the fact that you're here as a believing individual is evidence of God's care for you.

Now the cause of the flight of the woman is set forth in verse 7. "There was war in heaven," this too is written from the standpoint of the future. In fact, we could render this, as one well knows commentator has rendered it, "And war burst forth in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." The time again is the midpoint of the tribulation period and this too is written from the standpoint of the future. The contests are Michael and his angels and the devil and his angels. It seems like an unequal fight, but Michael, remember, is the great prince, Daniel tells us, who stands for the people of God. And so in the standing for the people of God, which are identified in that passage -- incidentally, as believers among Israel, Michael, with God upon his side, fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and the

dragon did not prevail -- this is something like a cosmic prelude to the consummation.

It's rather ironic, isn't it? Here is the devil, the one who, if we may believe the Books of Ezekiel and Isaiah, as they typically look at Satan, the one who wished to have equality with God, the one who said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation and the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." So, this individual who is grasping for the final sovereignty is taught a lesson by the one who possesses it, the Lord God. And the lesson is there is one sovereign eternal being, the Lord God in heaven.

The history of Satan is an interesting history. We don't have time to talk about it now. We talked last week about the eruptions on the earth of this warfare. For example with the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden, the evidence is of it in the 1st chapter of Job. In which Job is put in the hands, in a limited way, of Satan. We, in Daniel chapter 10, verses 12 and 13, read of the man who Daniel saw in visions saying to Daniel, Daniel when you pray your prayers were heard. But I was hindered in coming to you by the prince of Persia. In other words, Satan's empire is not simply a conglomerate of individuals who are opposed to God. It's an organized kingdom and princes over various parts of the inhabited earth so far as we can tell. The prince of Persia was a spiritual being. So the eruptions on the earth from time to time transpire. Jude speaks of Michael and the devil contending over the body of Moses, and then, of course, the Book of Revelation will show us the final destiny of Satan as cast out into the earth, thrown into the abyss, and then finally into the lake of fire.

There is a story that Donald Grey Barnhouse used to tell about a man who had an enemy. And this man was a very unusual man, he had a great estate, it was a beautiful estate filled with beautiful trees. His enemy was very much an evil man. He was very much annoyed by the master of the estate and wanted to do him harm if he possibly could. Finally he conceived a plan that he thought would greatly wound the heart of the

owner of the property and he decided to go to the property at night in the dark and cut down one of the most beautiful trees. He laid his plan well. He went out one night with his ax and saw, and he began, after picking out the tree to cut down. He labored all night and was just about to see it fall, and he looked down the road. And he saw the owner riding on a horse with a friend, or companion.

And so he worked feverishly in the last few moments, and just as the two rode up, the great tree fell. But unfortunately he was caught by a branch, pinned to the earth, and was obviously in mortal pain. As he drove up, he jeered at the owner, in spite of the fact that he was a dying man, and shouted about how he had finally be able to win the battle against him. The owner however as he listened to him finally had his chance to speak, and he said to the man, "You thought to do me great harm, but I want to show you what you've done. This man with me is my architect. And we came out to take a look at our property and make final plans for the house that I wanted to build. I want you to look at the plans." He showed him the plans, and he said, "You see, the tree that you have cut down is the tree that we have planned to cut down. And all the time that you thought that you were causing me harm, you were actually working for me, without knowing it. Your toil is for nothing and bitterness is your food in death." So everyone who fights against the Lord God -- ultimately, He shall win.

Now, finally in verses 9 through 12, the fall of the great dragon is set forth. You may remember that our Lord Jesus in Luke chapter 10 when the seventy returned from their preaching ministry, they said to our Lord, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Our Lord envisions, anticipates, what we find here said by the Apostle John.

So the expulsion of the deceiver is set forth in verse 9. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Satan, of course, is a deceiver, so far as the way of life is concerned, or put it this way, the way of salvation is

concerned because he blinds men. All men are naturally blinded to the Gospel. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, there foolishness to him, neither can he know them. They are spiritually discerned. That's why when you give the Gospel to your friends, there's the blank look that comes over their face, and you recognize that they are not responding at all to what you are saying. That is a blindness that is a product of working of Satan, "in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not," the Apostle Paul puts it.

But Satan is also a deceiver in the way of life. He reminds us in his activities of an individual who is constantly seeking to cause stumbling among Christians. The apostle speaks of Satan as a deceiver in his ministry as an apostle. In 2 Corinthians, particularly, at least three times, he mentions that fact. And even, he says it's not surprising that Satan should be a deceiver because after all that really is his work. Read 2 Corinthians chapter 11 and you will read that he even has his ministers and his apostles among those who are our religious leaders. If you want to look for Satan, and be sure to find him, don't be looking out in the places that are far away from the pulpit. Look in the pulpit. That's where Satan's ministers appear, and that's where they are most effective. When they stand behind the pulpit, open the Bible, and then tell us things that are not really found in the word of God.

There is a man whose books I have often liked to read, T. R. Daves. And he has a book called *On To Orthodoxy*. Mr. Daves was an Anglican clergyman. He was a Marxist in the twenties, and was an Anglican minister, but nevertheless, a Marxist and an unbelieving man. He was ordained in the church, but he began to think in his mind that perhaps he was on the wrong path. And finally in the thirties, he had a Christian conversion and also a political and economic conversion, as well. And in this book, *On To Orthodoxy*, he has an interesting statement. He speaks about the Trout incident, it was published in 1939. You'll recognize the time as just before Germany and Russia's attack on Poland, which started World War II. He said, "The tribalism which is arising so

ominously in Germany today is the gradual agglomeration of the individual self consciousness into a connected consciousness, but in that consciousness there is the skill and power which man has acquired through thousands of years of struggle, and the horror of that is simply indescribable.

If one might use an illustration, one would say that by degenerating into an ape, man would become a different kind of ape, an ape with the skill of a scientific technician. Imagine a world of men with an ape soul but the mind of a technician." He goes on to say, "That is the horror to which forgetfulness of a creator, sovereign God has exposed humanity. The possibility of such a hell has already emerged in history. Then he makes this, I think, significant statement. He said, "The fullness of the Kingdom of God is unrealizable in our time. Man cannot achieve it, but alas the fullness of the Kingdom of Satan, in time is a monstrous possibility. For it is the result of man's original sin."

I, personally, believe that we can see signs of that today. We have man amassing great technical knowledge, but his spirit and soul depraved and departed from the truth of God. Married to that will produce a horror indescribable in the history of our civilization. I think you can see it in the everyday life of our city as well, with the violence and the absolute madness that seems to characterize those who are fighting against the truth of God. Things that are almost impossible to conceive, young men twelve years of age that every attempt on the part of our society to control has come to an end and even they throwing up their hands and say, "This is an impossibility." So, that is what we really face.

Now, when Satan is cased out into the earth, we read,

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

This is so startling. The basis of the victory is the blood of Christ. The appropriation of the victory, the sign of the responsive to the death of Christ, is the word of their testimony, and the attitude of the saints of the future, "They loved not their lives unto the death." That's precisely Paul's attitude, as he expresses it in Acts chapter 20 and verse 24. I hope you'll look at that, but then what do we read here specifically, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."

Waylon Morris, some years ago, made a very significant study of the term blood. And he came to the conclusion, and I think it's a right conclusion, is that when the Bible speaks about the blood and the blood of Christ, specifically, it refers not to what one might think, that is simply the shedding of physical blood, but it refers to a violent death. To put it in other language, when we read of the blood of Christ, we are talking about a death that is a death by violence. In other words, it involves a sacrifice. It involves the making of propitiation. We cannot speak of the blood in a physical sense only. It's necessary that our Lord die physically, but the real significant death of our Lord is his spiritual death. When he cried out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me," he is experiencing spiritual death. The physical death follows, that's part of the curse of the fall. But the real death is the spiritual death.

Now the term, "the blood of Christ," is a reference to the violent death of our Lord and is inclusive of his spiritual, as well as his physical, death. It suggests sacrifice. It's the blood of the Lamb. Did you notice? So, we're talking about that which is spiritual, and we're talking about that which is physical as well. But let us not underline one without expressing the other. We're not to call upon man to mourn the physical shedding of our blood, as if that is the reason of our atonement. We're to think about the spiritual death as well as the physical death. Never forget that.

In fact, this whole thing brings up the question of the propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God. We have so much sentimental thinking concerning love today in the Christian church that it's sad to see us going so far astray. When we

talk about love, and if we think of love as being sentimental love, romantic love, like the love of a man for his wife, or a wife for her husband, and if we leave it at that, we have not spoken of biblical love.

Let me put it this way, the Apostle John speaks about propitiation, and he speaks about love. In fact, he puts them together. John rises above all kind of comparisons we might make to an absolute point of view at which propitiation and love become ideas which explain each other. In other words, if you want to know what propitiation is and you come to know it, then you know what love is, and if you want to know what love is, you don't know what love really is until you see it in the light of the propitiation, the satisfaction, the death of Christ for sinners.

In other words, he defines propitiation by relationship to love, and he defines love by relationship to propitiation. He says God, himself, loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. That's the explanation of divine love. It's the love of sacrifice. It's the love of the greatest of all sacrifices. It's the love of the infinite sacrifice of the son of God. Don't talk about love as if it's a sentimental kind of love. That is so far short of the Bible as to be almost an error. So far from finding any kind of contrast between love and propitiation, the apostle can convey no idea of love to anyone except by pointing to the propitiation. Love is what is manifested in the propitiation. He can give no account of the propitiation but by saying, "Behold what manner of love."

And so, let me sum it up this way, in the words of James Dennett, "So true, if you could just get one thing, one thing as Christians from me, I would want it to be this. For the apostle to say, 'God is love,' is exactly the same as to say, 'God has, in his Son, made propitiation for our sins.'" That's what the love of God is. So when we read here that they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, that's what he's talking about. He's talking about the propitiation which the lamb made, the sacrifice that the lamb offered, the bloody, violent sacrifice that the Son has accomplished for sinners. Luther said, "Did we

in our own strength confide our striving would be losing, were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing." He is the one who offered the propitiation.

Isn't it interesting to that you read this, and you realize there's war in heaven and there's war on earth, but it's not like people drawing up lines of battle and firing guns at each other. One of the commentators has said, "What it is really is a legal battle. It's a legal battle in which there is a council on one side and a council on the other, and one side is disbarred because on one side is all of the authority and power of the sacrifice of the Son of God, and the position of the other is defeated legally because the sacrifice by which sinners are delivered from their sins and made free in Christ has been offered in the Son of God. So, I'm not surprised then that the apostle should write, "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short tim."

The devil's great wrath is due to the short time between that time and his ultimate and final incarceration. So Christians, the devil is a defeated person. He is, as Morris says in his commentary, he's a beaten individual. He is beaten, not to be beaten. He is beaten by the blood of the Lamb. The sentence will be carried out in the future. How useless it is for us created beings to struggle with God, even great angelic created beings, like Lucifer, how useless to struggle against God. Christian divorce, can you imagine anything more contrary to the word of God. One individual or whoever is in the wrong in such matters struggling against God who has spoken plainly in holy Scripture. Defeat is certain. Materialism, we so interested in the material things as over against the spiritual things. Imagine struggling against God, putting second things, or third things first, reorganizing our priorities for our benefit.

Liberal churches preaching what is suppose to be the gospel of God, but is not. They shall surely come to ruin, business and busyness, so many Christian men putting their work before the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Inevitably you shall suffer. I often

see it in our families, children and churches, churches chosen because of children. You shall surely be beaten if that is your philosophy. You are given the precious responsibility of your children, to follow the word of God, to bring them to the instruction of the word of God, that which will build them up most satisfactorily in the things of our Lord. Lucifer progresses from the anointed cherub that covereth, in typical form in Eden, to the dragon and the abyss, and ultimately, to the like of fire to be eternally tormented

Let us, my believing friends, pay careful attention to the word of God, and may God and his grace enable us to order our lives in harmony with the Scriptures. If you're here today, and you've never believed in our Lord, we urge you by the grace of God in Christ to flee to Christ. Receive the forgiveness of the blood of the Lamb. Coming to new life in Christ, may God enable you to serve him and participate in the victory that has already been won, through our Lord.

Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent words that the apostle has given us. What a blessing Lord thou hast given to us, to enable us to read and ponder this great Revelation. When we look out over the world today, so many do not even know it exists, or if they know it exists, have never laid eyes upon the word of God. How blessed we are. O God, help us to be submissive to the truth in our day and in our age. For Jesus sake, Amen.