



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 12: 13-17

"War on Earth"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning to Revelation chapter 12 and reading verse 13 through verse 17 for our Scripture reading. I must confess, and I guess this is the best time to do it, that I think I made a mistake in devoting an entire message to this section. Usually, in going through the Book of Revelation, I usually take this entire chapter, but I thought that I would enjoy doing it a little more slowly than usual.

But these verses are very difficult verses and I hope that you will, not only bear with the Apostle John, but with me as well as we study these verses, verses 13 through verse 17. I am sure that they are very important, but I have not yet plumb the depths of their importance. But anyway, we are turning to verse 13 through verse 17 for our Scripture reading. And the apostle writes,

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. (You may remember, of course, that we have had these time designation several times already in this book. In

verse 6, for example, we read "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." The twelve hundred and sixty days is the same number as the time, times, and half a time. And then twice in the 11th chapter, in the 2nd verse, we read, "the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." That's another way of saying the same thing. And then, "I will give power unto my two witnesses," in verse 3, "and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days." We're taking the position, incidentally, that that's the last half of what is known, generally, as the tribulation period of time and thus a reference to what our Lord calls the Great Tribulation. Now the 15th verse continues the account), "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The "testimony of Jesus Christ," if you examine the other occurrences in the Book of Revelation in which that expression occurs, there are several of them, probably indicates that this is the testimony that he, himself bore rather than testimony to him; the testimony that he bore and that has now been committed to the apostles. May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let's bow together in our morning prayer.

[Prayer] We thank thee, Lord, for the word of God which Thou hast given to us. And we thank Thee for this great book which so beautifully sets forth the glories and the preeminence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amid many difficult things that are hard for us to understand, his preeminence shines clearly through.

And we are thankful for the greatness of the Son of God who is, who was, and who shall come in a second advent and establish his throne upon the earth. We thank Thee and praise thee for him. We pray Thy blessing upon each one of us that we may be responsive to the things that are found in this great book. Enable us, as we think of the unveiling of the future, to properly respond to the great principles that affect our daily lives the way that we should live as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ today. May Thy blessing rest upon every faithful, giving forth of Thy word.

We pray for our country. We pray for our president, for others associated with him, and our government, and our state and local governments as well. We pray for our leaders, Lord, give them wisdom and direction as they direct us. We pray, particularly, for the sick. We commit them to Thee. We pray that Thou administer to them through their physicians and through their family and friends and give healing in accordance with thy will.

We're grateful, Lord, for the chapel and its ministries. We thank Thee for our elders, who have the oversight over us, and for the deacons who serve us. We are thankful for their ministry and we are especially grateful for those who sacrificially give themselves to other forms of outreach: in the office, in the tape ministry, in the radio ministry and publications, all of those, Lord, who give their time and efforts. And we pray that thy hand may be upon us for spiritual good. We thank Thee for the privilege of being together on this, the Lord's Day, for the privilege of singing hymns in honor of our Lord and to our Lord in worship. And we pray Thy blessing upon us now as we sing, as we listen to the Scriptures for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today, as we continue our exposition of the apocalypse, is "War on Earth." What we have been saying, among other things, is that the warfare of the ages between the Lord and Satan is encapsulated here in the unfolding of the two

scions. And the birth and ascension of the man child, together with the warfare in heaven, which now in the verses that we have looked at, turns into warfare on the earth. The first scion in heaven the woman clothed with the Son we have identified as Israel. The second scion, in verse 3, the scion of the Great Red Dragon, we have no doubt about the significance of that, because in the 9th verse the author identifies the Red Dragon as that old serpent called the devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world. And then in the 5th verse we read that the woman brought forth a male son, who was to rule all nations with the rod of iron, a clause taken from 2 Psalm in the Old Testament, a Messianic Psalm, "and her child was called up unto God and to his throne." We commented upon the fact that nothing is said about the life and death of the male child, who surely is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. John, for the purposes that he has, feels that he must pass over his life, death, burial, resurrection about which you have just sung. And I go on to speak of his Ascension at the right hand of the father, in token, perhaps of the fact that he is interested in the victory of the Son of God through his ministry.

Now, he knows about his life and death. It's not because he was ignorant of that, because in the 11th verse we read, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." So, he knows of his life, he knows of his death, he knows of his death as the Messiah. For the lamb was typical, the Passover Lamb, of our Lord himself. So, he knows of that but he doesn't feel it necessary for his purposes at this point to say anything about our Lord's earthly ministry. He goes on to speak of the warfare in heaven that exists from the beginning of time but breaks forth in heaven as a warfare between the evil one, the devil, Satan, and Michael and his arch angels. The result of that warfare is that the dragon is cast into the earth and persecutes the woman.

Now it's important to remember several things when we come to a passage such as this. In the first place, it's very difficult and it's, I think, very helpful to have a sense of hermeneutical humility in coming to it because out of the vast numbers of expositions that have been written of the Book of Revelation, there is a remarkable variety of views by

individuals who are Christian men. And so we are not surprised, when we read the chapter through, to find that it is a difficult chapter. And so it's important that we remember several things. In the first place, we should remember that human beings cannot give prophecy.

Now, I know that there is a gift of prophecy that was given to the early church, but we have no evidence in the Bible that that gift exists today. Many people claim it, but generally their prophecies, over a period of time, prove that they really do not have it. So, the impossibility of human prophecy is something we need to keep in mind. I like that deliciously ironic Chinese proverb, "to prophesize, extremely difficult, especially with respect to the future." We need to keep that in mind. We also need to keep in mind the weakness of human understanding of prophecy, even Christian understanding of prophecy.

Now, let me give you an illustration of this. In the Old Testament, in the Book of Daniel, in the 9th chapter, and incidentally in the exposition of this book nothing would bring you more prepared for our studies here at 11:00 A.M. than a familiarity with the Book of Daniel. It's very interesting. I think it would be nice if you just read it once a week and particularly now, through this section for in our next study, next Sunday, the Lord willing, we'll be dealing with the first beast. And then we will deal, also, with the second beast, the false prophet. And it's so helpful to know something about Daniel because that's the preparation that one needs to understand, at least some of the major things, of this book. But let me remind you of this, with the Book of Daniel in the hands of students of Scripture, such as the scribes, it's evident from the New Testament record that they really did not know that Christ was to come. The Messiah was to come when he did come.

If they had studied the Book of Daniel, they would have known that it was approximately the time for the Messiah to come. Daniel sets forth his great prophecy of the seventy weeks of Israel. And in those seventy weeks, which have to do, ultimately,

with four and ninety years, he sets forth the precise time from the statements from Nehemiah chapter 2 that will lead to the coming of the Messiah. So if individuals had studied Scripture, really studied it, they might well have known that it was the time for the Messiah. They did know, even those who were not known for their belief, that he would be born in Bethlehem. We read of that and of their correct interpretation in chapter 2 of the Gospel of Matthew. So if we think about this for a few moments, we will realize that even those individuals who had some knowledge of the word of God did not understand the details of the prophetic word.

They were surprised, they were wrong on many points, they did not recognize the Messiah when he came. So we need to keep in mind the weakness of human understanding of prophecy. And the reason I say this is because we are now looking forward to the Second Advent of our Lord, and the vast array of material that has to do with the Second Advent of our Lord is the challenge that faces all readers of Scripture.

So again, we should approach it with a bit of humility. It's hard for me to do that, of course, but nevertheless, with prayer and fasting, maybe we can develop some maturity as we think about understanding this great book. If those individuals were wrong about the first advent in so many ways, the chances are that in our attempt to put together the numbers of details from the Old and New Testament concerning the Second Advent, that we are liable to misunderstanding as well. Let me give you one simple illustration. In the Old Testament we read in Micah that the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem, but then in Isaiah in the 9th chapter, speaking of the Messianic times, the prophet writes, "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations."

So the two prophecies, it goes on to say, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." And you know that passage is associated with the coming of the

Messiah, our Lord Jesus, but who would ever have been able to put together those two prophecies. One that has to do with Judea and the other that has to do with Galilee and realize that they both would be fulfilled in the death of our Lord, because thou he was a Nazareth, his mother happened to be and he happened to be in Bethlehem of Judea when he was born. So the light truly shown upon Galilee but at the same time he was born in Bethlehem.

So it should help us a bit as we think about the word of God and realize that the chances are that we are not going to be able to put everything together as it should be put together, but still we are called upon in the study of the word of God to make that attempt to study the Scriptures. It is necessary that we study them, and it is necessary that we use the gifts that God has given us and the light that he has given us to develop the interpretation under the spirits' leadership that will bring us to a better understand of the word of God.

Many of you have no doubt read in books in which, particularly in history books, you will find medieval maps as they understood the world in their day: woefully inadequate, woefully wrong in many ways. But do you know, had it not been for those medieval maps, we would not have had the great explorers accomplishing the things that they accomplished. In other words, even poor maps can help individuals in exploration. And so consequently we look and ponder at the word of God realizing we may do it in error, but nevertheless, we will do it with profit if we give ourselves really to it. So study the Book of Daniel. It will help you.

Let me say just a word, also, about a broad outline of the events that lie in the future from our day. We'll deal with the details, some of that will come up as we go along, of course. What we look for next in the word of God is the rise of the ten kingdoms described later on in the book and then the rise of the beast, the world ruler, who shall come. In fact, in chapter 13, in verse 1 of this book, we read of his rise, "I stood upon the sand of the sea." It really is talking about the dragon and that Greek text

reads, "He stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." So we look forward to the rise of the kingdoms and then of the beast.

Daniel tells us that the beast shall make a covenant and it seems make a covenant with the Jewish nation. He will make that covenant at the beginning of Israel's seventieth week at the four hundred and eighty three year period point in the four hundred and ninety years until the Messiah comes. And we also then read that politics of the day will be dominated by Babylonian religion. It's evident religion shall play a very great part in the life that is before us. And incidentally, you may think if you read your newspapers, that religion is not very important today. A lot of people speak about the unimportance of religion, but if you will carefully look at the great issues of the day, you will see that almost all of them are grounded in religious questions.

At any rate, politics will be dominated by Babylonian religion and then the beast, after a supernatural experience described in the very next chapter in verse 3, a counterfeit experience of our Lord's, evidentially, will break the covenant that he makes with the Jewish nation and the ten kings will overthrow Babylonian religion and seek to coral religion for the uses of the beast in the middle of the seventieth week, that is at the point of three and a half years, the time period that we referred to in the reading of Scripture. The establishment of universal government will take place under the beast and international economy, isn't it interesting too that things in our economic world moving toward something like that whether that's what the Scriptures speak of or not, only time will tell. But one can see the trance that might lead to an international economy. Certainly Europe is moving toward a European economy. That may be a step along the way.

We also know from the prophecy that there will be an ecumenical religion with the beast being the one who is worshipped, he and his image described also in the next chapter and also by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians. So that we look forward to, we

look forward to, finally, the defeat of the beast, the destruction of his capital city called, in the Book of Revelation, Babylon, and then the Lord Jesus Christ's coming. Man's city, man's kingdom destroyed by God and the Lamb.

Now, that's just a broad overview but these are the things that we need to be thinking about when we read these chapters in the Book of Revelation, in particular, as we turn to chapter 13. But please, if you get a chance and surely you can make a little time, read the Book of Daniel. Study the 9th chapter, verse 24 through verse 27, particularly. Sir Edward Denny called that particular section, "the backbone of prophecy." It's so important.

Let me tell you a little incident that relates to it. John Owen, one of the greatest of the English theologian, perhaps the greatest. Many have called him that. You have read books by Jim Packer. Dr. Packer is a student of John Owen and, as I remember, got his Doctorate in the Theology of John Owen. A very important man, one whose works have been republished, sixteen very difficult volumes, and still worth reading. It's amazing to think about it that bathtub religion may arise out of John Owen's teaching on knowing God. So John Owen was an important man who lived in the 17th Century.

He said about Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 through 27, that, "it is justly esteemed the racks and tortures of the rabbis," because it stands so strongly behind the Christian understanding of history. Furthermore, another person writing about it, the Reverend Job Orton in the 18th Century tells of an interesting incident concerning this passage and prophecy. In the last century he's writing, the 17th Century, there was a public dispute at Venice, in Italy, between a Jew and a convert from Judaism. And the subject was the sense of the prophecy of Daniel chapter 9. The Christian Jew urged his arguments against the Jews with so much force that at length, the rabbi said, "Let's shut up our books for if we go on examining this prophecy any further we shall all become Christians. It cannot be denied that the time of the Messiah's coming is already past," he said, "but whether Jesus of Nazareth be the person, I cannot determine." Now that story is accompanied by

claims that several of the Jewish people who heard that public debate did become Christians as a result of it. But I would suggest to you that you get acquainted with that prophecy.

But let's turn to Revelation 12, verse 13 through verse 17. And the first thing that we note in the 13th verse is the satanic persecution of the remnant. We read, I read this verse again, "And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. These verses, 13 through 17, further expand verse 6 where we read, "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 three score days." Perhaps with "the woman" is not only a small element of the nation in that day, but inclusive of the one hundred and forty four thousand that we read about in chapter 7, who were sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel.

And further, perhaps the two witnesses of whom we have read in the 11th chapter may be accounted among them. But at any rate, the woman or Israel, that is the true believing ones in the tribulation period, that seven year period of time, now are persecuted by Satan and they are driven into the wilderness, the place prepared of God. This tribulation or this indignation, for that's the term in the Old Testament that is frequently used of the tribulation, the indignation. The indignation is theirs because they represent the Messiah. Now that's a very practical point that has reference to us in 1989. We who are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ have been properly admonished by our Lord. We have been told, through the upper room discourse given to the apostles that we may expect to be persecuted as well.

I'm turning to John 15 and reading verse 19 through verse 21 and this is what he said to the apostles in the upper room. John chapter 15, in verse 19 reads, Jesus is speaking to the eleven and says, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Now, my Christian friend, you know, if you have given any

testimony for Christ at all, you know the meaning of that. You know that your basic life is not harmonious with the life of the world, that you are different. You have been chosen out of this world. You live in it, you pay your taxes, you have your friends, you do your grocery shopping, and you carry on your work or business or profession.

But nevertheless, there is something distinctly different about you and sooner or later it will appear, your philosophy, your values, the things that you are ultimately concerned most with are different. Our Lord is right; we are not of this world. And he goes on to say that the world therefore, because he has chosen us out of the world, will hate us. "Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

Now, of course, they have good reason to persecute us, because we sin. The world is quick to find it out and when it happens, they like to applaud our failures and they persecute us. Well in that case we're not persecuted for righteousness sake, but we are persecuted for unrighteousness sake. But believers are going to be persecuted by the world or it may be a scorn in some areas of our world. In other points, it may be physical persecution. He says, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake," not for your sake, but "for my name's sake," "because they know not him that sent me." So the indignation is the woman and her seed because of her relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. That has such great practical reference to us in our day, in our own Christian life. In other words, the world will be unhappy with us because the evil one is carrying on his quarrel with Jesus Christ. That's ultimately the quarrel.

One can see it in Paul's conversion on the Damascus road when our Lord appeared and the words that our Lord uttered were, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He does not say, "why persecutest thou the Christians?" or "Why persecutest thou the church?" That could have been said. But he puts it so beautifully, identifying himself

with the believers that the apostle, before he was an apostle, was persecuting. In other words, he is saying in effect the great principle that believers are in him, united with him, must be recognized. So, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And the persecution of the apostle was because they were in Christ. Later on, the apostle experienced the same kind of suffering himself. This period we've said, is the period of Satan's great anger and it's the period that we call The Great Tribulation Period. It takes place primarily in the land, and in fact, in the city of Jerusalem will be some of the most important part of it. As chapter 11 mentions the temple and the holy city that they tread under foot for forty and two months, the holy city being the city of Jerusalem.

Now in verse 14 through verse 16 the apostle, giving Christ's revelation remember, describes the supernatural protection that God will give to the woman. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman," that would be more significant than hurricane Hugo I imagine, "and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." We'll stop at verse 16 for a moment. Prophetic passages in support of just such an appearance appear in a place or two in the Old Testament in Isaiah chapter 26, in verse 20 and verse 21.

In the midst of a section that is apocalyptic in its significance of the minds of many Old Testament scholars, in fact, chapter 24 through chapter 27 of the Book of Isaiah has been called, by scholars, The Little Apocalypse. But in verse 20 of chapter 26 we read, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation," the term for the tribulations and "until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her

blood, and shall no more cover her slain." In other words, the people are called to hide themselves; the Lord is coming in judgment to execute his judgment upon the wicked. There is something of this here in the section that we read verse 14 through verse 16.

Now, this raises a question: How are we to interpret these verses? Should we interpret them symbolically or shall we give them a more literal interpretation? Scholars differ over this point and surely this is a place where we have to say "perhaps" when we set forth our own views. The symbolic interpretation is that this doesn't really have anything to do with historical events, that is, of the future, but rather a symbolic expression of struggles that take place and of the Lord's help in the midst of them that may be applied to all of people who may be identified with our Lord whenever they are experiencing persecution. Some of the things that have been said about this are rather interesting, even those who take it more literally.

For example, when we read, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle." Some interpreters, perhaps desiring to be a little bit sensational, have suggested well that's quite plain. "The two wings of the great eagle" is a reference to the Air Force of the United States of America and the Phantom jets that they have. You can tell from that interpretation that it is a little out of date. If you believe that interpretation and you would like to spread it around, you have to change Phantom jets now, to F-15's and F-16's and, perhaps, the Stealth Bomber may find some place in your eschatological interpretation.

Now, personally, I do not find that interpretation very believable. To my mind, this passage is filled with figures of speech and it's filled with some symbolism but it does speak about a real event it seems to me. And so I take it more in a literal or normal sense. I notice that the terminology is very similar to the terminology of the Book of Exodus. Even our most scholarly interpreters have pointed out the fact that lying back of this is the terminology of the Exodus event, in which Israel was called out of Egypt and brought into the Promised Land. And many of the things that were historical events then,

have some similarity to the things that are found here. For example, when Pharaoh sought to drown the children of Israel in the Red Sea, God parted the sea and gave them deliverance.

And in fact, back in the Old Testament, in Exodus chapter 15, after the children of Israel have successfully accomplished the passage through the Red Sea then Moses and the children of Israel sang a great song of redemption. In the midst of it, they sang "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them." And then in 19th chapter, in the 4th verse, looking back upon that the Lord said unto Moses, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." So the similarity is such that the language, evidently, is drawn from that.

Furthermore, the idea of the earth opening up and swallowing up the flood that God permits the dragon to spew out of his mouth has some analogy to Old Testament events too. You'll remember that Cora and Dathan and Abiram sought to take the priesthood for themselves. They went to Moses and Aaron and said you take too much upon you and therefore the priesthood should be shared. And you'll remember what God said, we'll just have a little exhibition of who has been appointed by God and who has not been appointed by God and he arranged for the earth to open up and Cora and Dathan and Abiram and all of the rest of them went down into the earth, the funeral service and the burial and the death all accomplished at the same moment. So the idea of the earth opening up is not something that is new, it actually is something that is open.

One thing we do know, the Lord Jesus said that he is establishing his church upon the rock of the confession that Jesus is the Messiah. And he said also that, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church." So we know, even though we may not be absolutely certain of the details of the future, we know this that if our hope in our Lord we shall ultimately overcome because he already has overcome in his death on Calvary's

cross. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and we too shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb. I wish I could give you, with authority, the interpretation of these verses; I cannot do it. Unaccustomed as I am to humility, I must acknowledge that I do not understand, with absolute certainty, the meaning of these verses. I hope you will study and you will come and give me further light.

Now, finally, we come to the 17th verse, for our time is just about up. And we read, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." We know this, from chapter 7, that there will come out of the great tribulation a multitude which no man could number out of every kindred, tribe, and tongue, and nation. So while it may seem as if the dragon is wroth only with the woman and that there is a remnant of people that we are talking about a lot of individuals. And so as the war from heaven and then from earth from the dragon touches the people of God, we have the assurance from other passages in this very book that vast multitudes through the experiences will come to the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And so I would think that what is referred to here is what leads to the salvation of that great mass of people from every kindred, tribe, and tongue and nation.

They are called "the rest of her seed," and the language reminds us of the great promise in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent: probably a reference to at least Gentile believers, but probably believers generally. Gentiles, remember, are included in the Abrahamic Promises. Those who believe in our Lord are children of Abraham. They are spiritual children of Abraham, not ethnic children, but spiritual children of Abraham. So we are justly called in the word of God, we Gentiles, children of Abraham. The rest of her seed, because God said to Abram, remember, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

We too have hope of entering fully into the Abrahamic Promises. He concludes by saying, "which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus

Christ." The testimony that he bore which has become ours by virtue of the Holy Spirit who has brought us to the knowledge of our Lord and brought us into the family of God and has given us remission of sins.

Isn't the history of the dragon interesting? As I mentioned last Sunday, "he was the anointed cherub that covereth." That's the highest of the angelic creation. When he fell, when iniquity was found in him, he not only fell himself, but he carried a vast number of angelic beings with him in his fall. He says in verse 4, "and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven." And so the dragon and a vast number of nonelect angels form the enemies of the plan and program of God. But what a bright beginning: "the anointed cherub that covereth." And furthermore, Ezekiel says, perhaps in typical language, but nevertheless expressing the beauty of his original creation, he says, "he was in Eden." Now we know, of course, that the evil one did come to be in Eden after he had fallen. But he is called in Scripture now, the dragon, the serpent, the devil: terms that express various aspects of his ministry.

Now as we read through this Book of The Revelation, we will discover in the 20th chapter, this dragon, this one who has been cast out of heaven now and now is one the earth, faces one thousand years in the abyss. Described in chapter 20, in verse 3 translated sometimes, "the bottomless pit." And then we further read in that chapter that his last historical appearance will be he will be cast, after that period of time, into the lake of fire. The cherub, and then to the bottomless pit, and then to the lake of fire. Just think of what a tremendous history that is. Oh the effects of sin, the wages of sin is death. And the dragon experiences that as well. But that Scripture, of course, is written for us in 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 24, the apostle wrote, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins," or having died to sins, "should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Oh the effects of human sin.

Do you have the assurance of deliverance from it? Are you still living in the guilt of the sin that you inherited and that you have demonstrated as yours by the kind of life

that you have lived? Do you know the forgiveness of sins through Christ? Do you have the assurance of eternal life? It's a great text and the last chapter of the Bible it was the favorite text of James Chalmers, one of the great Scottish missionaries, missionary to New Guinea. His favorite text was chapter 22, verse 17 of the Book of Revelation, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." That's the invitation that we give. "And let him that is athirst come." If you have the desire for the forgiveness of your sins and the assurance of everlasting life, come," and if we have missed anybody, "and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

You may be wondering whether you are one of the elect or not. You can settle that question today. All that's necessary is for you to come, come to the Lamb of God, come to the one who has shed his blood, come to the one who has laid the righteous foundation for eternal life and its possession, come to him. That is the work of one chosen of God. Come to him. But now if you say, "I don't know whether I elect and to tell you the truth I don't really like that doctrine, I'm not going to come." Well you have no excuse. You're getting exactly what you want. You have said you don't like it and you don't want it. So you get exactly what you want. You don't want to come, but the invitation that the Spirit gives is come and if you have any questions come anyway. Your questions will be answered by the Lord God through the Spirit. So to you here in the audience, come, come to Christ.

One last word, I know every Sunday morning you say, "Dr. Johnson usually goes over." But look back there at the clock, just turn around there and look. It's right on 12:00. This is a historic occasion. [Laughter]. This is almost as much of a miracle as the opening up of the earth and the flood being swallowed up by God. So miracles can happen. Let's stand for the benediction,

[Prayer] Father, we are indeed grateful to thee for these magnificent words from the Lord Jesus Christ through his servant John. We acknowledge, Lord, there are many

things we do not understand about them, but it's very clear to us that life, eternal life is found only in the great second person of the eternal Trinity.

And O Father, if there are some in this audience who have not come to him, may they come at this very moment acknowledging their sin, confessing their sin to our Lord and then accepting the free gift of eternal life which he offers which he purchased at the awful price of the shedding of his blood in his death. Go with us as we leave in Jesus name. Amen.