



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 13:1-3

"The Beast from the Sea, part I"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are expounding the apocalypse, or the Book of Revelation, and we have come to chapter 13. In preparation for the ministry in chapter 13 we looked, for two Sundays, at Daniel chapter 7, in which we have material that is important for understanding Revelation chapter 13. For those of you who were not here on those two Sundays, it will help if after the morning message you go back and read chapter 7. You'll see that chapter 13 leans very heavily upon some of things that Daniel saw in his vision in that chapter.

Today we are reading verses 1 through 3 of chapter 13. And let me make just a little point ahead of time since we have a rather short passage to read. Chapter 12 ended with the dragon, or Satan, persecuting the woman who gave birth to the male child. And in his attempt to destroy the woman and her seed, the dragon was unable to do so because providentially God helped the woman. And so chapter 12 concludes with verse 17,

"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of

Jesus." (Now, the next little sentence in the New American Standard Bible is put in chapter 13) "And he stood on the sand of the seashore."

It so happens that this particular phrase, "And he stood" is found in some of the manuscript in this form, "And I stood," and the difference is one letter. For example, "and I stood," is simply *ephistemi*, "and he stood," *ephistaphe*. Now it's not surprising that the manuscripts of the Book of Revelation differ at that point. I'm going to assume that, "and he stood on the sand of the seashore," is what John wrote.

Now, you can see the difference if we read, "and I stood on the sand of the seashore," then it would be the Apostle John who is doing the standing and from that position sees the beast arise out of the sea. But if it should be rendered, "and he stood," as the great majority of contemporary New Testament texture of critics would read it. "Then he stood on the sand of the sea," is a reference to the dragon and that's the way we are going to take it. And what follows in chapter 13 is what is the product of the activity of the dragon.

"And he stood on the sand of the seashore, (And then John sees the beast coming up out of the sea. But now, let us read the three verses of chapter 13. The apostle writes) "And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. (Actually the Greek text, in some of the manuscripts, has the singular name rather than names. But the point is relatively mine, I will pass that by) And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast."

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

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of reading and pondering the apocalypse that Thou didst give to the Lord Jesus who in turn gave it to his Apostle John. We thank Thee that by the sovereign providence of God we are enabled to read this revelation and, through the Holy Spirit, able to ponder it's meaning and in this way prepare ourselves, not only for our life now, but for the things that lie ahead of us as the Christian Church. We thank Thee for the insight into the future and especially for the hope that we have as we ponder the things that shall come to pass upon this earth.

We thank Thee for the assurance from the word of God that our great triune God in heave shall ultimately be victorious and that his purposes shall be perfectly carried out. We are grateful Lord and we thank Thee for the comfort that that gives to us. We pray Thy blessing up on the whole Church of Jesus Christ today wherever it meets and we pray that the ministry of the word may be fruitful in the lives of all who hear the truth that Thou hast give to us. Bless those who preach the word. May they preach in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. We pray Thy blessing upon other aspects of the meeting of the day, upon the singing, upon the Christian fellowship, upon the relationships that we have one with another. May our Lord be glorified in them.

And Lord we pray for this local body, for its leadership, our elders, and deacons, for our membership, and for the friends of the visitors who are here with us here today, we pray that Though wilt bless each one of them and meet the needs that each of these groups have. We pray for the sick. We especially remember them and those who are in the hospital, we remember them and those who minister to them, the physicians, and their family and friends. And if it please Thee Lord, we pray that Thou wilt give healing.

We pray for our country. We ask Thy blessing upon our president and upon this land. May the freedoms that we enjoy be continued and may we have the freedom to

proclaim our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinners. We ask that Thou wilt be with us in this service Lord. May we have the sense of Thy presence and may we be profited from our time together for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now, we're expounding the Book of Revelation and seeking to make good sense out of it. There are many things within the revelation that are difficult and hard to be understood, and if Peter had written about John as he did about Paul, he no doubt would have said some of the things that he said about Paul's writings, that in them were things difficult to be understood. This book is not easy, but one of the nicest things about it is that it is so orderly, so beautifully outlined. And if one reads it and continues to read it, you'll be surprised at how much you get out of it. But, of course, everything, you will not get everything out of it and there will always be some things that will puzzle you a bit.

Today is the first of two messages on the beast from the sea, which consumes the first ten verses of chapter 13. And then the next Sunday after that we will devote a time to the beast out of the land. But today we are looking at the beast from the sea, our first study.

John the apostle, in one other place in his Gospel, to be exact in chapter 3 says that, "Our Lord's mission was not to judge the world but to save the world of both Jews and Gentiles." Now, I add that because you might misunderstand if I didn't say that. You see, John was speaking in the context of Nicodemus, a Jewish rabbi, and he wrote out of the context of that theology. And the rabbis, or the rabbinic writings, looked at the coming of the Messiah as a time when Israel would receive their promised blessings and the Gentiles would be condemned. That was their idea. And so the apostle, when he writes of the mission of the Lord Jesus, goes out of his way to point out that our Lord did not come to condemn the world of the Jews and Gentiles, but he came to save the world of Jews and Gentiles. In other words, he wasn't going to deal only with the nation Israel,

he was going to deal with the nation, or the Gentiles, as well. So he did not come to condemn the world but he did not come to save everybody within the world. So his mission then was not to judge, but to save those of both Jews and Gentiles who would believe in him.

Now the dragon, or the old serpent, or Satan, has the opposite design. His design is to condemn and not to save. So one, as we look at this chapter, can see that reflected. Another thing that the Apostle John said that bears on what we are talking about is the statement that he made in 1 John chapter 2 and verse 18. In the midst of that text he says, "Little children, you have heard that antichrist shall coming," Think about that for a moment. "You have heard, little children, that antichrist shall come." It was not a surprise to them, he said, "You have heard that antichrist will come." We would like to ask the question, "Where did they hear that the antichrist should come?" And we might even want to ask the question, "How did the Christians have this information and under what circumstances would the antichrist come?" But the fact that they were familiar with the coming of the antichrist is indicated by that statement, "You have heard that the antichrist shall come."

Now, I gather from this, and I think rightly, that the coming of the antichrist was part of the common instruction that was given to God's people. In other words, in John's day it was proper not speak not simply of the Messiah but to speak of the coming of the antimessiah, the antichrist. So and remember, of course, that they did not have the New Testament in its fullest form. And so consequently, what they were saying has reference to the Old Testament as well, and one can turn to the Old Testament and can therefore expect to find information and teaching concerning the coming of the antichrist. That's an interesting thing and when we think about Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15, generally regarded as the first preaching of the gospel, the protoevangelium. When one thinks about that particular text, I think you can see that in that opening promise of the coming

deliverer who would crush the serpent's head, we have an indication of a line of teaching that touches exactly upon what we are reading here in Revelation chapter 13.

You see, in Genesis three fifteen, the very first promise of the coming of the woman's seed that would crush the head of the serpent, we have an indication, a kind of dark adombrassional foreshadowing of an antagonizing power that would bruise his heel in the midst of his ministry for the believing peoples. We also read in that text of a seed of the woman, which is not simply one but a multitude. And then we read also of a seed of the serpent. So the serpent has a brood just as the woman has a brood.

Now, in the case of the woman's brood, it is ultimately the Messiah and those who are represented by him, the believing people of God. But in the case of the serpent, it is Satan and his brood. So when we read the Bible, then right in the beginning, in the very first chapters, we are introduced to a conflict. In fact, in Genesis chapter 3 in the earlier part of the chapter, we see the evidence of it in the temptation of man, and woman, and their fall. So the Bible is the story of a conflict, as some has said, of the ages. So that for an Abel, there is a king. For a Moses and an Aaron, there is a Jamnes and Jambres, the magicians.

For Jerusalem, there is a Babylon. For a John the Baptist, there is a Herod. For the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are false apostles, so the apostle says. And down through the centuries, for the truth of God there is the error of Satan and his followers, the antichrist. And in fact, the truth of the word of God is to the effect that today there is a seed of the woman and of our Lord, particularly because he's the seed. And then, there is the seed of the serpent and they, the seed of the woman, reaches it's climax in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ the seed of the serpent reaches it's climax in the ministry of the antichrist. So when we look at the word of God we are expectant of just such teaching as we find here.

Now, the purpose of chapter 13 becomes plain if you'll ponder that statement, "And he stood on the sand of the seashore." Taking that rendering, "And he stood to be

genuine." Then Satan, having failed to defeat the woman and now carrying on a conflict on the earth with the seed of the woman, the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus, stands on the earth on the sand of the seashore. And you can almost fill in the rest of it if you will pay careful attention. What he is doing is standing on the sand of the seashore and he's pondering now what he's going to do in order to continue his fight. In fact, what he's going to do is to call to his aid two allies. And the two allies will be the first and the second beast, the antichrist and the false prophet. So you can just see him standing and standing looking at the sea and then out of the sea there arises the beast from the sea and later on another beast coming up out of the earth. He's going to call upon them to help him and they will give him some help to. The Authorized Version, I say, obscures this. But nevertheless, I think that is what he is seeking to say.

Now, very simply what we will do in the thirty minutes that we have from here is I want to say a few words about the origin of the beast, he comes from the sea, and what that suggests, and what the term beast suggests, and then also say something about that which the beast may represent. Then we'll look at the description of the beast, particularly in verses 1 and 2. And finally, we'll talk for a moment about the restoration of the beasts. And I'm going to try, in the conclusion, to make a reference to why Satan should be so anxious to do what he does. But let's look first at the origin of the beast. And the apostle writes, "And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea."

Now, when we were expounding the Book of Daniel, we made the comment that the sea in Scripture is frequently figurative of the nations of the earth, with their raging and their turbulent kinds of activity, suggesting a sea in the midst of the storms. So the sea is frequently figurative of the nations of the earth. Isaiah chapter 57 verse 20 and 21, and even this particular book, chapter 17 and verse 15, we have the use of that figure again. In verse 15 of chapter 17 we read, "And he said to me, "The waters which you saw

where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues." And so the figure is used in different contexts, but it's the figure of the nations of the earth.

Now, John, looking at that which represents the nations of the earth sees the beast coming up out of the waters. Now, it's important also to notice that the term beast here is not a beast of burden. The term that is used, the noun therion, a diminutive of ther is a term that means a wild beast. So we are to think of a wild beast, a beast of prey not a beast of burden, when we read that he saw coming up out of the sea a beast, so a wild beast.

Now, here is where it's so important to be familiar with Daniel chapter 2 and chapter 7, particularly chapter 7. Those two chapters say essentially the same thing, but in the seventh chapter the term beast is used. And those of you who were here the last two Sundays will remember that in Daniel's visions of chapter 7 he saw a lion, and then he saw a bear, and he saw a leopard, and then he saw a beast that he could not describe arise. And as he went on he talked about these four beasts, and ultimately, he spoke of how he looked in heaven and saw the Ancient of Days and the son of man coming to him and being given the kingdom over the earth.

And he also speaks about how the final beast in that last form is ultimately destroyed and the kingdom given to the saints of the Most High. And we have expounded that of being the giving of the kingdom of over the earth to the Messiah and those whom he represents. So those four great animals, the final one, the fourth one being the very significant one, one not found in any zoo incidentally. Don't go to a zoo and ask, "May I look at Daniel's fourth beast?" It's not found there. You can see a lion, you can see a bear, and you can see a leopard, but not that indescribable beast.

We also made the comment, based up on a number of passages, but particularly chapter 9, that it's evident that in that fourth great indescribable beast, we are told by the Lord through the prophet Daniel that that last kingdom is a Roman kingdom. We know that from chapter 9 because the antichrist, or the prince who shall come, comes from that



kingdom that destroys the city of Jerusalem. That's plainly stated in Daniel chapter 9 and verse 26. And furthermore, it is stated that that fourth kingdom follows upon the defeat of the third or the overthrow of the third. We know in history that was the Roman Empire. And so we gather from that sense, in the visions of Daniel there is a suggestion that this kingdom exists until the end days.

Now, that fourth kingdom must have then two forms. It's form in the days of the Caesars, for example, and then a revived form in the latter days. All of that, you're gonna have to take my word for it to some extent because we're not expounding all the details of Daniel at this point. So we're calling this, that is, the kingdom with which this beast is to be associated, a revived form of the Roman Empire. One interesting thing, incidentally, is that the Roman Empire was really never overcome such as the others, but actually disintegrated from within. And in fact, one can look at history as a collection and a succession of various attempts to restore the Roman Empire all the way down through the centuries. So in that sense one may regard the Roman Empire as still in process of being reformed, since it disintegrated from within. Some of the attempts were the attempts under Charlemagne, actually an attempt under Islam.

The church came closest to the revived Roman Empire with the Holy Roman Empire. And in fact, at one time it was so powerful that political kings could be kept, like Henry IV of Germany waiting barefoot in the snow for three days before Gregory VII would even see him. So one can see how important the church was at a particular time. Some have even suggested Napoleon attempted to do that when he was stopped by snowflakes near Warsaw. Hitler attempted it and he failed with Mussolini. And even down to the present day, maybe there are some who've attempted it, but we know from Scripture that it is the antichrist who is the missing link. He's the leader strong enough to have a worldwide dominion again.

Now, John then tells us that he saw a beast coming out of the sea. Now, that suggests then that this beast who represents both a kingdom, and is himself its leading

figure, is the preeminent representative of the last kingdom upon the earth before our Lord comes. The description of the best that follows is very striking. It's a description of what one might call "the chaos monster". And in fact, the description is very similar to some of the things that one reads in ancient literature. One looks at it and one might call it a nether reservoir of evil, a *tiamat*, a primeval monster of ancient mythology. And it's important to notice, incidentally, that all of the beasts are of the same nature. They all arise out of the sea, and thus, they have the same nature. They're all evil. They're all opposed to the things of the Lord God.

You know at this point when you're – I for many years taught the exegesis of the Greek text of the Book of Revelation, the theological students – and at this point when you read, for example, that this beast had ten horns and seven heads, usually the hands of the more intellectual of the students would raise and one would say, "Dr. Johnson, may I ask a question?" And I would say, "Yes." And he would say, "If there are ten horns and there are seven head, which head had the mouth?" And usually some would smile at that question. But it's not a bad question actually. And if it wasn't that question someone would raise their hand and say, "Dr. Johnson, there are ten horns and seven heads. How are the horns distributed on the seven heads? Which have two horns and which have one?" And, of course, one would have to say, "We're not to look at this in that way." As a matter of fact, that text doesn't tell us things like that. You are permitted to puzzle over it if you want to. And in fact, you may wind up in a mental institution [laughter] if you want to spend all of you time doing that. But nevertheless, that's something that John doesn't tell us.

Most of the scholars of this book will tell us the important thing in this picture, since it is a figurative picture obviously, is the pictorial ideas that are found within it. It's not a visuals image, the kind of visual image in which you could identify things like that, but it's very much of a pictorial picture, which you are given and there are just certain things that John has not made plan to us. But let me list the features.

Now, those of you who were here for the last two of our Sundays together will be better able to understand this than others, but I will try to go through them. He states that this beast had ten horns. And in the exposition of Daniel chapter 7 we've pointed that the ten horns represented ten kings, and further that that representation of ten kings related to a later period of the empire to which they were attached. In other words, such as the great image of chapter 2. We have the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw and then after the head, and the breast, and the belly, and fire parts are identified we have the long legs, suggestive of a lengthy period of time. And finally, the ten toes of the image. And then in the picture of the beast, we have the description of the beast and then out of the beast there arise ten horns. Again, suggestive that the horns is a later period of the life of the beast. So the ten horns then represent kings and kingdoms that have to do with the last stage of the revived Roman Empire.

Now, we are perfectly justified in looking around if we want to at the various ways in which one might see something like this. We've mentioned the Group of Ten, an economic federation of nations having to do with economic matters. We have, for today, the European Economic Community at the present time composed of twelve nations. We have tendencies that one might call trends, that's all I think that we can say. The trends in our world, particularly our western world, to unite in various ways and have groups of nations doing certain things. So we can only say this, that the last stage will be a stage in which there will be a union of ten of the kingdoms and kings.

We identified kings and kingdoms because they can be spoken of in the same way as were the fourteenth said. I am the state. And so the beast is the nation incarnate. Consequently, the beast can be a reference to a kingdom or to a king, but it's evident that he's a personal individual ultimately. He is said to have seven heads. Later on in chapter 17, the seven heads are suggestive of seven kings, which again may have reference to seven Gentile governments. We will talk about that when we get to chapter 17.

It is stated that these heads have names of blasphemy. "On his head were names of blasphemy." Now, John wrote in a day in which there was a lot of blasphemy in the Roman Empire. For example, Augustus Caesar was called *devas*, or divine. He was called *sebastos* in Greek, which means essentially the same thing, "divine". The coins in the east had pictures of the Roman emperor and on them was the word *theos*, which means God.

Nero had himself identified as the "savior of the world." And finally, Domitian, who was emperor in John's day, wished to be addressed as *Dominus et Deus*. And in fact, whenever Domitian made a proclamation he would say, "The lord and god does so and so." Or "Your leader, your ruler, lord and god, makes such and such a proclamation." Just as if George Bush were to say, "Your lord and god says such and such." And so in the Roman Empire that was common. And so you can understand why John, thinking about this, might even be thinking about the Roman Empire of his day as typical of the final form in which the names of blasphemy are particularly to be applied.

Remember also that Rome did not mind you believing anything you wanted to believe. The one thing that it demanded was that each individual who was interesting the empire should take a piece of incense, and should burn it once a year, and when he burned that piece of incense he should say, "Caesar is Lord."

Now that was one thing that the Christian could never do. They could never say, "Caesar is Lord." And so consequently, the Christians of that day were not regarded as heretics, they were regarded as revolutionaries. They were regarded as outlaws. And so consequently, they were persecuted, not because of their religion primarily, but because they had a religion that had as its fundamental doctrine, "There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, and one way of salvation." If they had said, "That's the way we believe in, but other ways are permissible," they would have been acceptable and especially if they had taken a little piece of incense and burned it and said, "Caesar is Lord." They might have even argued among themselves this way. Someone who had very strong views could say, "I could

never say that, I would rather lose my life than say that." That might be exactly what he would experience.

But another would say, "Well, it doesn't mean anything. They don't care if you really believe something else but so long as you go through this rite, or ritual, it'll be okay." And I can just imagine how they might argue that point and many, who perhaps were true Christians, would compromise in that way. They would say, "They don't really mean it. And so consequently, I'll save my neck by saying, 'Caesar is Lord.' But I really believe the Lord is Lord." I can just imagine those types of discussions going on it that day.

Now, John goes on to say that after he says that hey had blasphemous names he says, "And the beast which I saw was like a leopard." Now, that's surprising. You would have expected him to say, "It's like a lion," because the lion was the first of the beasts that Daniel saw. He says, however, "It's like a leopard and it has feet like those of a bear, and it's mouth like the mouth of a lion." So the fundamental likeness of this beast is the likeness of a leopard, not a lion, not a bear, but a leopard.

Now, that's striking. And the reason it's striking is because it seems to suggest that the principle feature of this final beast is its leopard origination. Now, the leopard represented Greece. So I'd like to say to you that it's likely, of course, these animals picture certain things, the leopard, the agility and solarity of Alexander the Great, for example, the bear, the veracity of the Medo-Persian Empire, the lion, well the terrible nature of the Babylonian Empire. But I'd lie to suggest to you that the vision then of the antichrist is the vision of a king of Grecian cunning, of Grecian cunning over a federated Roman ten kingdom empire, the last Satanic form of gentile world dominion. In other words, the Grecian aspect should not be missed in the antichrist. What it all amounts to, of course, is a monstrous parody of the Lord Jesus Christ, taking after his energizer who was, as Luther said, God's ape.

The kingdom includes all the evils of the four world empires. That's evident because when Daniel is given his vision of the great image when it is destroyed by the stone that strikes the image. It is specifically stated in Daniel chapter 2 and verse 35 that the image as a whole was destroyed at the same time. For example, the text reads, "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time," or as one. So we expect then in this final kingdom to find elements of the Babylonian Empire, elements of the Grecian Empire, elements of the Medo-Persian Empire, and furthermore that they persist to the end times. So then we might also note that since this is the kingdom of the antichrist, that Satan still has throne to confer. He has lost his rights, his has not lost his power.

He is still, as the apostles set forth the prince of this world. Well, in fact, our Lord calls him "the prince of this world". Paul calls him "the god of this age". Let us not think for one moment that Satan is bereft of his power. His rights are gone because when the blood was shed on Calvary's cross, he was defeated. But his defeat has not been carried out yet in its details. In other words, this world of which we are apart, my Christian friend, is still enemy occupied territory. That's why the Apostle John says, "The whole world lies in the wicked one." And it will so be until our Lord comes and completes the victory that he won on cavalry's cross.

You certainly can see that Satan does not originate things. What he does is imitate our Lord and the Lord God. So what we have then is this monstrous imitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's rather striking that when Satan tempted our Lord, he said to him as he took him up and showed him the kingdoms of this world, "All of these kingdoms, I will give to you if you will fall down and worship me." Our Lord replied, "You worship Satan, the Lord God, and him only do you serve." But the time is coming when Satan's beast shall arise, the antichrist, and he will make that offer, Satan himself, to the beast. And the beast will accept his offer and seek to carry it out.

Now, finally in verse 3 we read, "And I saw one of his heads as it had been slain. And his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast." Now, this is not, in my opinion, a resurrection. For a resurrection is only a resurrection if it is a bodily resurrection, and furthermore that the body that comes out of the grave is a glorified body. Only our Lord has been resurrected and only he to this point can have that term "resurrected Lord". But this is something like a resurrection. It's a resuscitation, or it's a restoration that can pass for a resurrection. We read here, "And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed." So in contrast of our Lord's resurrection, this is a restoration. This is, so far as I can tell, a lying miracle such as is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 9.

Isn't it striking that our Lord Jesus should come from the grave in resurrected body and the world rejects him, even says that it's a lie, when the Apostle Paul preached the resurrection of the body to Festus he said, "Paul, you are out of your mind. You are mad." But here is an individual who has such rapport with the world that when he has something like a restoration, the whole world is tremendously impressed, astonished, and follows after the beast.

My time is nearly up. One can see, of course, from this that this portion of the word of God surely is a very solemn portion of the word of God and one to which we are to pay the greatest attention as the author says later on this book, "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city which are written in the book." So there is an admonition, we are to believe the things that are in this book and we are not to tamper with them. And furthermore, the book opened, you remember, with a blessing to those who will read the book. "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the word of the prophecy and heed

the things which are written in it." The greatness of the lamb of God and his atoning work is seen in the strenuous and feverish attempts of Satan and his servants to destroy the effects of our Lord's work by the evil imitation of it.

This past few days I've been reading again some of the events of William Cowper's life. Most of us over this side of the Atlantic Ocean know him as William Cowper, but that term, that name, a familiar family name in Britain website always pronounced as if it were C-O-O-P-E-R or Cooper. William Cowper was an English poet called to the bar, suffered middle crisis and collapse, was cured temporarily but latter fell into it again, associated with John Newton. He was known as the poet of the evangelical revival, the precursor of Wordsworth, he wrote many hymns, many poems, did translation work, incidentally, and wrote many letters. Many of his things are of the greatest interest to us.

But for Christians he's particularly known as the author of some of the greatest of our hymns. "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood", "Drawn from Immanuel's name", "God Moves in a Mysterious Way", "His wonders to Perform", and "O for a Closer Walk with God", these are just some of the many that he wrote. He was bereft of his mother when he was six years of age. And he was left with a Father who was bewildered by the odd fancies and erratic ways of the son and so he banished him to a British boarding school where he was badgered, and bullied, and beaten without mercy.

Until the end of his life, he never thought of that place without a shudder, he said. He attempted suicide several times. And from this person, we have inherited this lasting Christian poetry. He was called "the most important poet" of England between Pope and Wordsworth, and the "singer of the dawn" by Dr. Arnold of Rugby. What was the trouble that almost broke his spirit? Well, he tells us, it was his sin. He can find no fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Told of the lamb of God, he said he didn't know how to approach him. And while he was a patient at this private mental institution, we used to call them "lunatic asylums."



That's what it's usually called in the history books. While a patient there, one morning he got up, he felt a little bit better, so he took his Bible, which he usually threw aside in fits of madness and he did like a lot of Christians falsely do in seeking guidance. You know, close your eyes, and open the Bible, and take your finger, and point at a text, and say that's the text you're going to follow. Well, he just opened the Bible at random and, well, Dr. Daniel gave us the other night an excellent talk on the providence of God and so we way now by the providence of God he opened it to Romans chapter 3 verse 24 through verse 26. And that reads,

"Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness."

You are familiar with the passage, I hope. So he opened it up to that, he read that text and from it he found God's free mercy in Jesus Christ. And he himself said this, listen to these marvelous words. He said, "Immediately, I received strength to believe." And the full beams of the son of righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon in his blood, and the fullness of completeness of his justification. In a moment, I believed and received the Gospel." It was, incidentally, that same text from which Bunyan received deliverance and of which Bunyan said, "Oh, what a turn it made upon me. I was as one awakened out of some troublesome dream."

One might ask, "Why did that great passage make such an effect upon him?" Well, think about it for a moment. The argument of the great passage is one you cannot gain say. It's irresistible. If God's work in love for us is so great as to provide us a savior, how could God be eager for the condemnation of the guiltless, if he has done that. If the grace of God is so freely outpoured and justifying energy through the Lord Jesus Christ,

how could any many be beyond the pail of hope? And if God is so anxious for the salvation of men that he has set forth, Paul says that, "He has set forth Christian as a propitiation." That he has set forth, underlined, emphasized, exclaimed, made bravely prominent, this propitiation, why should even the most fearful of mortals draw back in terror?

And we might add, I can see why Satan is so concerned to keep man from the word of the Gospel because if the Gospel is that and offers us that freedom, that pardon, that propitiation, that forgiveness of our sins, then Satan can no longer keep man bound in the guilt of sin. And we flee from the prison house of sin to the blessedness of membership in the family of God. It's by that Gospel that men find the long sought fountain and the light that leads to the lamb of God. As I was thinking about it, I sat down in my own words what really we might say about this using Cooper's hymns and their titles. God moves in a mysterious way, indeed. The spirit breathes upon the word, one of his other great hymns, with a sanctifying light leading to a fountain filled with blood. O, for a closer walk with God is the natural response.

May God in his marvelous grace touch your heart. May you see what Christ has done for sinners. And may you look inside your own heart and see how desperately you need that forgiveness that is found in the blood that is shed. And may, as a result, you lean as he did upon what Christ has done for the forgiveness of your sins. Don't look within, you won't find any reason for forgiveness there.

Look outside at the one who hangs upon the cross for sinners and offers the propitiation for sins, the satisfaction of God's claims against me. Trust in him and receive by grace the gift of eternal life. No better time to do that than right now. May God touch your heart, may you turn to him. You need him if you don't have him. And may you find forgiveness of sins. He still works in that mysterious way and gives free pardon. Let's stand for the benediction.

“The Beast From the Sea, part I” by S. Lewis Johnson  
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[Prayer] Father, how grateful we are for the gift of eternal life through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank thee that thou hast never turned aside any sinner who has come to thee. May at this moment in this auditorium some be turning to thee for the forgiveness of their sins. Lord, go with us as we part for Jesus sake. Amen.