



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 13:4-10

"The Beast from the Sea, part II"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Returning to Revelation chapter 13, we are reading verse 4 through verse 10. This is the second on this ministry of the thirteenth chapter. Next Sunday, the Lord willing, we will look at the remainder of the chapter. And our title is, "The Beast from the Sea". There is one point in which I will comment on. I'll try to give an explanation of a problem of interpretation, and I'll do it in the Scripture reading rather than in the message. But we begin with verse 4 and conclude with verse 10,

"And they worshipped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like the beast and who is able to wage war with him? And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, that is those who dwell in heaven. And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and authority over every tribe, and people, and tongues, and nation was given to him." (Probably, notice that we have four times in this brief section have referenced "authority given" or different things given; a passive voice being used.) "And all that

dwell on the earth will worship him, every one whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the Book of the Life of the Lamb who has been slain."

Now this is the passage in which we have a different interpretation possible, perhaps even probable. You will notice the expression "from the foundation of the world". Now that may go with the verb "written", that is "whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world," or it may be taken with the participle "slain". In which case we would read, "Every one whose name has not been written in the Book of the Life of the Lamb who has been slain from the foundation of the world." In other words, the prepositional phrase may be taken with "written," in which case the Book of Life of the Lamb, the Lamb's Book of Life has been written from the foundation of the world, or if it is taken with "the Lamb slain," then John is telling us that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. That is what happens in chapter 17 and verse 8, that the apostle writes these words, "The beast that you saw was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and go into destruction: and those that dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name had not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world."

Now no reference is made there to the Lamb who was slain, so in the light of chapter 17 and verse 8, many interpret and assume that we should take the same view point of chapter 17 and verse 8, here in chapter 13 and verse 8. Of course, there is not any determinate reason why that is so, because it is possible that the Book of the Life of the Lamb and the names written in it should have been done from the foundation of the world, that is from eternity, or there is not reason to think that we cannot say, "the Lamb who has been slain from the foundation of the world," if we are thinking about that as in the eternal purpose of God. So there isn't any really strongly doctrinal reason to prefer one or the other.

On the one hand, however, in chapter 17, we have the expression connected with "written". But it could be connected with "written". It could be connected with the other, and furthermore, in chapter 13 and verse 8, the expression "and from the foundation of the world" follows the verb "slain". In other words, to take it with "written" requires you to jump over almost a dozen words. Whereas, in the ordinary flow of the word it would be found very harmonious to take it with "the Lamb that has been slain". And so, with many commentators and this is a legitimate place where men may differ, I am going to take it that way. I am going to take this as "whose name has not been written in the Book of the Life of the Lamb who has been slain from the foundation of the world".

So, we'll take it that way and I will expound on the text accordingly, and you will understand, I hope, why. You can see that in your New American Standard Bible translators differed, and they took the expression "from the foundation of the world", threw it back in the sentence so it would agree with "written"; the authority being chapter 17 and verse 8. But the grammatical, the most natural grammatical way to take this text is to take it as I am taking it. So for syntactical and grammatical reasons, I am taking it that way. When we get to heaven we will find out who is right. And I am confident. [Laughter]. I'm confident, but I am willing to acknowledge that the other is good scriptural teaching too, for the Lamb's Book of Life is written from the foundation of the world and the Lamb, I believe, is slain from the foundation of the world. I will say more about that in a moment when we get to it.

Then in verse 9, John concludes the section with, "If any one has an ear, let him hear. If any one is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes. If anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints." May the Lord bless this reading of His word, and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this great apocalypse which contains so much interesting revelation concerning the things that lie ahead of us and things also which unfold and clarify the things which have taken place in the past. We are grateful Lord and we give Thee thanks for the word Thou has spoken to us. We take it Lord that Thou does desire that we study this book and that we seek to conform to it, by the help of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, Thou would not have given us Thy word. Help us Lord to be earnest, and sincere, and submissive in our approach to the Scriptures. We pray Thy blessing upon the whole church today as the word of God is proclaimed, not simply here, but wherever Christ is lifted up. Oh God, bless the word. Bring additional spirits and souls into the membership of the one body of Christ, the church.

We pray also that Thou would strengthen the saints, comfort them, console them. We pray particularly for those in our congregation who have been bereaving in the last few hours and days. Encourage them. Supply their needs. Build them up in the faith, those who have to face the tragedies of our present life, the sufferings, the things that are difficult for us. O God, strengthen us for them. We pray for others whose names are listed in our calendar of concern. Bless them and give them healing in accordance with Thy will.

We pray for our country, for our President, for this nation. We thank Thee for the freedoms that we have. Oh God, enable us to continue to have them. And we pray for other nations, as well, who do not have the freedoms that we have. Be with us now in this service as we sing and then as we have Christian fellowship with one another. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[Message] Last Sunday in the message on the opening verses of chapter 13, I introduced the message by pointing out that John says in his gospel that our Lord's mission was not to judge the world but to save the world of both Jews and Gentiles. I commented about the fact that the term "world" in the light of the context and in the light

of the situation, the Apostle John speaking to the individuals who had the concept of God blessing the nation Israel, but Gentiles made special reference in that to the fact that the blessings of the messianic salvation are not simply for the nation Israel, but inclusive of the Gentiles as well. Many of the rabbinic have the idea that when the Messiah would come it would be blessing for the nation Israel, but for the Gentiles, it would not be.

So in the Johannine literature, particularly, written probably from Ephesus in the gentile world, that was one of the things that moved him as the Spirit moved him to give us his gospel and his epistles; both of these ideas being found there.

Now if our Lord did not come to judge the world but to save the world of Jews and Gentiles, then we can say that the dragon had the precisely opposite design, because he came, not to save, but to condemn. The purpose of this chapter, we said, was very plain. Chapter 12 had concluded with Satan foiled thus far in his war against the woman seed and against the seed of the woman's seed; that is the believing people of God.

Standing beside the sea of the raging nations, he calls from them two allies who are to help him in his work. These two allies are the two beasts of chapter 13. The first beast we will call the antichrist. The second beast is called the prophet, the false prophet. So we will take them that way.

The opening line of chapter 13 probably should be attached to chapter 12. "And he stood on the sand of the seashore," should conclude chapter 12. And now this is what John sees as a result of the plans and purposes of the dragon. He received the vision of the two beasts.

When people translate the Bible and when they deal with original manuscripts, they are faced with a problem. In the early days when manuscript transmission, all kinds of manuscript transmissions, the letters that followed one right after another without any space between the words. So an individual was responsible for reading the letters and in his mind as he read the letters, to make the proper divisions between the words. They were not made for him in the earliest manuscripts. If you look at ancient manuscripts of

the New Testament, for example, they are written one letter right after the other. That might seem a daunting task, but when one has experience in doing that, then skill is obtained in doing it and it is not nearly so difficult as it might sound. In order to make it easy, so people use to read out loud. Like when the Ethiopian Eunuch and Philip had their engagement. He was reading out loud and Philip knew what he was reading because that was the way he was reading.

Now we have here a case of this because chapters must also be divided in the same way. "And so he stood on the sand of the seashore," should be taken with the preceding. We can see how this is if we just reflect on, say an English illustration. If you take the words, "God is nowhere," and put them together without any space between the words, that could be read by someone, "God is now here", instead of, "God is nowhere." So if you believe in the immanency of God, then you might want to render it, "God is no here". Whereas, if you were an atheist or some other type of individual, you might read it, "God is nowhere". But the letters are precisely the same.

There is a story of a Hebraist, who was use to reading such manuscripts, spent all his time doing it, who was walking along the street and he looked off and he saw a place where women met to change their clothes. I presume for some type of particular activity. At any rate, on the outside of the door there was the words without punctuations, "Private no one may enter". But since he was use to doing his pronunciation as he was reading, he looked up at it and this is the way he punctuated it, "Private? No! One may enter." [Laughter] And so he entered and he found that his interpretation was false. He was quickly thrown out.

Well, "and he stood on the sand of the seashore," should be attached to the preceding chapter and that's the way we are taking it. But the sense of it is the dragon is seeking now to call individuals to his help in his purpose of overthrowing the plans and purposes of God.

Now we go on to look at the career of the beast now in verse 4 through verse 10. The first thing that characterizes his career is the worship of him. And we read in verse 4, "And they worshipped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like the beast and who is able to wage war with him?"

Now you can see from this that the beast thought the antichrist was an attractive person, a fascinating person. He is also an all powerful person whose greatness lies primarily in his brute strength; the kind of thing that the people in our day worship. Brute strength and power mingled with attractiveness and perhaps even a little flavor of the macho.

Well, the antichrist is that kind of person. The praise, rhetoric that one finds here, "who is like the beast and who is able to wage war with him?" is specifically chosen ultimately by the Holy Spirit to reflect scriptural praise of the Lord God. In other words, the same kind of praise that ought to be given to the Lord God; that is the kind of praise that men in the days of the antichrist, will render to him. When the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, went through the Red Sea, came out on the other side, then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song and in the midst of the song in Exodus chapter 15 and verse 11 they sang, "Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?" The language is obviously built upon language just such as that. One could turn to other places in the Old Testament and show that. Such as Psalm 89 and verse 5 through verse 10; and then in Micah chapter 7 verse 18 through verse 20, the prophet Micah in the same kind of rhetoric praises the same kind of pardoning power of the Lord God.

So the ultimate then is the picture of an attractive, fascinating, all powerful person; all powerful to the earth, his greatness lying in his brute force, and the people parroting Scripture, praising him as an absolutely unique kind of person. Now that is very interesting for us because it shows us that the antichrist is not the kind of person that people will think of as a bad and evil person. The saints will, but the saints are a great

minority. They will think of him that way because guided by the Holy Spirit and instructed by him, they will know something about him. But the world will think of him as a great and grand and glorious leader.

When you look in Scripture you have intimation of the way that God works. We look all the way back to the Book of Genesis and we have those two individuals, one Jacob and one Esau. And if you had to pick between the two characters, almost inevitably, if you were not guided by the Holy Spirit, you would say that Esau is the most attractive person. Listen to, for example, one text. "When the boys grew up Esau became a skillful hunter". That is, he was a man who liked to hunt. In fact, there are individuals not in the congregation today who are out hunting and men like that kind of thing. They admire that. And of course the ladies are similar. So, in the case of Esau, "He was a skillful hunter, a man of the field but Jacob was a peaceful man in the tents." He has often been called the man that was tied to his mother's apron strings. And surely you won't prefer this rather deceitful fellow, this crooked man to Esau who is the picture of attractiveness and manliness, as well. But as you see from the word of God, it is Jacob, ultimately, who is the one upon whom God has put His hand.

That is one simple illustration, but there are others. Take Saul and David. In the case of Saul and David, we have a similar kind of thing. Listen to what the writer of 1 Samuel says about Kish's son. Kish was himself a man of Benjamin. He was a mighty man of valor. And he had a son and his son was Saul. And we read, "He had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome man and there was not a more handsome man than he among the sons of Israel. From his shoulders up he was taller than any of the people." Handsome, tall, illustration of true masculinity.

Now we look at David, the shepherd boy, and upon whom God had put His hand in His own choice. As a matter of fact, when it was told that one of David's father's sons had been chosen by the Lord God, they didn't even bother to bring David into consideration. But God's hand was upon David. And Saul, this magnificent man, a fellow who could



have played for the Mavericks, maybe that's the kind of thing the Mavericks ought to have these days. [Laughter] He might have even played for the Cowboys, but God put His hand upon David. In putting His hand upon David, He also gave him the wisdom and power to accomplish things that Saul, as it turns out, never could.

Or come right down to the time of our Lord, we have Judas among the apostles. The one apostle who may have been from Judah and those who were from Judah were regarded, though wrongly, as being more cultivated, more cultured than the rest of those of the apostles who were from Galilee. In the case of Judas, he obviously was regarded highly by the apostles because they turned over the treasury to him. He is the one who carried the bag. In other words, Judas is the kind of person that you would have admired. You might have had some serious questions about Peter, and James, and John. But Judas, you would have had no problems with him. As a matter of fact, when our Lord said, "One of you will betray Me," they never guessed, not a one of them, that it would be Judas. And when we come to the antichrist or the beast, you can be almost sure that the world would never guess that the antichrist is really what he turns out to be.

The reformers thought of the pope as the antichrist. In many of the ancient commentaries, you will find the pope as the leading candidate for antichrist. Fortunately, and generally, interpretation has turned away from that by even those who even reformed view points, but it is pretty obvious from reading this chapter that a religious leader is not the one who should be looked at as a possibility here. This is a political leader, primarily, and not a religious leader. For that reason, I do not think that there is any justification for saying that the antichrist will be one of the popes. First, of course, it is probably unwise to make any guesses about anybody in the present time as being the antichrist. But we know the great things that will characteristic of these enemies of the Lord God.

The Apostle Paul gave us some warnings about him, about his particular family of individuals from Paul's day down to the ultimate consummation of the antichrist. He said to the Corinthians that such men who are disputing the gospel are false prophets,

deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. For no wonder even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end should be according to their deeds.

We do then know that this individual will be an individual who will be attractive. He will be mighty and powerful. He will be an individual who exalts justice and righteousness, but he will deny the redemption that is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we look around and we look for individuals who are deceptive and dangerous to the Christian faith, we don't look at individuals who everybody recognizes as being questionable. We should look rather at those who have general acceptance; those who stand behind the pulpit. As Dr. Barnhouse use to say, "When you are looking for Satan be sure to look in the pulpit." Because it is in the pulpit, the man who stands behind the word of God can be most deceiving. It is that kind of person. And let me tell you something else about our Christian organizations. Do you know that as far as I know there is no evidence of any Christian organization, mission, Bible school, university, theological seminary, who did not turn away from the truth with a Christian at its head? You go back and study the facts of Christian history and you will find that schools and churches and organizations, they all go bad with a Christian at the head. Look at our great denominations. Look at our great schools. Look at our great universities. Look at our great theological seminaries. Those that have departed from the faith have departed from the faith with believing men, supposedly, at their head. That is an important lesson for us to learn. Now the second thing that is said about the beast is that he has a certain limited tenure. We read in the 5<sup>th</sup> verse, "And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him". We read about the forty-two months more than once at this point and it has to do with the last half of that seventieth week of Israel. It lies in the future, what we know generally as the tribulation period, and this period the Great Tribulation. So he will operate for forty-two

months, that is, he will have his authority, he will seek to carry out his purposes. And characteristic of him will be arrogant words and blasphemies. "Boasts," Daniel said in describing him, "He will make great boasts and these boasts will be great blasphemies against the Lord God." Have you ever noticed characteristic of politicians?

Characteristic of almost all politicians that I know of, at least in my life time, and that's a long life time, I don't know of any politician who didn't boast. Even one of them tells us in boasting words why he should be in the present office that is up for contingent. Boasting. Boasting characterizes them all. One of our presidential candidates of a few years back, within the past years, had this said about him by one of his own colleagues in the Senate, "He is a humble, self-effacing, ego maniac." This man ran for president. George McGovern was his name. He was the one of whom one of his own colleagues said that about him. "A humble, self-effacing, ego maniac." All of our politicians, it seems, are boastful ego maniacs. Every one of them will tell you why he is so great. And it is almost impossible for him to say one good word about his opponent. Thinking that one good word about his opponent may destroy his candidacy for the office. The antichrist will be characterized by boastful arrogance and blasphemies against God.

Now there is some interesting points here in this description that is given of him. For example, we read in verse 5, "there was given to him". And then we read he was given, "authority to act for forty-two months that was given to him". We read in verse 7, it was given to him, "to make war with the saints and authority over every tribe, people, and tongue and nations was given to him." Four times it is stated that things are given to him. You know the passive voice. That means he is the reception of the action others. They were given to him. He didn't initiate these things. They were given to him, ultimately.

Now you may say that it was the dragon that did this, because the dragon does give him power, and throne, and great authority. But that explanation will not fit with the forty-two months as the time of his exercise of authority. That forty-two months was

given to him by God and God alone. So, it is evident that the reign of the beast is by divine determination, not by his determination, not by the dragon's determination. If the dragon had his way, the dragon would have his reign exist on into eternity. But he is given forty-two months by the Lord God. Let's put it down into good theological language, it is due to the decree of the Lord God almighty. That is way these things are given to him. God has a purpose in it.

That raises another question. The question is the relation of God and Satan. Well, what can we say about this? We can say, I think, this at this point, other things can be said, but we can say this, that when Satan does his worst he is still God's devil. In other words, he still belongs to the Lord God and he still serves in the particular place the Lord God intends for him to serve, which God gave to him by His own creation. In other words, "He is an authorized minister of God," as someone has said. He cannot burst out of God's order. He has to remain within God's order and despite his enmity, despite all his activities against the chains that God has put upon him, he must remain the servant of God until he has done His work and God ushers him off the scene. Luther was right. Satan is not only God's aid, copying things that God does because he wants to be like God, but he is also God's aid, God's devil. He belongs to the Lord God. That is greatly comforting to me to know that ultimately our Lord is in control of the affairs of this earth.

That raises a further problem. The further problem is the relation of God to evil. God gives the beast his blasphemous mouth, but to what purpose does he give the beast his blasphemous mouth? Well, to put it simply, as we don't have time to go into great detail. This deserves, of course, lengthy discussions, lectures. It is simply to manifest and reveal His grace, His goodness, His justice, and His glory. All of these things would never be known to us were it not for the fact that God determines that sin exists in His universe. He determined it. It did not surprise him. He determined that it exists, and he determines that it exists for the greater good that you and I and the saints of God might come to know His grace and to know His justice, to know His goodness, to know His

mercy, in which we would never know were it not for the fact that He determined that there should be sin in this universe. It did not arise out of His being anymore than the creation which He has created has arisen out of His being. He is the holy one. Over and over again, that is underline in Scripture. He is the holy one. But there is a significant thing that He gains and we especially gain by the determination that there should be sin in this universe for a time.

So this tells us a great deal about that as well. There are great problems that meet then in the raging of the antichrist and in the hour of Golgotha where the same thing comes to its expression in the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts chapter 2, when Peter was preaching his great sermon listen to what he said,

"Men of Israel, listen to these words. Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know. This Man delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."

The divine determination that our Lord Jesus should come, that he should suffer for sinners, but in the determination that we should have a Savior for our sin, those who put him to death as called by the word of God, godless men. They are responsible. In other words, when we talk about predestination, we are not abandoning at all the responsibility of men. Men are responsible, just as those men who nailed our Lord to the tree were responsible even though that event had been predetermined by the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God. All of this we find in these last events of the forty-two months. In other words, the same problems that meet us in the hour of Golgotha are the problems that meet us in the raging of the antichrist and the things that shall happen in those last days.

I think it is very striking too, that John goes on to say in the 8<sup>th</sup> verse, "All who dwell on the earth will worship Him. Every one whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the Book of the Life of the Lamb who has been slain." Every one except the elect. Isn't that striking? All who dwell on the earth will worship Him except those of God's divine elected people. They will not. Just as in the days of the apostles, when there were believers all over the face of the Roman Empire, when called upon to take that pinch of incense and to burn it and say, "Caesar is lord," they could not do it. And so in the last days, the saints on earth will not render allegiance and worship to the beast. He will make war with them and he will slay many of them.

If we take that "from the foundation of the world" or incidentally, we have a history of this in the word of God, we have in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar as described in the third chapter of the Book of Daniel, remember at the instigation of some he made the decree that all should worship Nebuchadnezzar when they hear the horn, the flute, the lyre, the trigon, the psaltery, the bagpipe, and all kinds of music that sounds kind of like Rock, doesn't it? [Laughter] But at any rate, when they would make that sound then everybody was to fall down and worship the image, sixty feet in the air, a great big image. They were to do it, but there were three fellows who wouldn't do it; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. As a result of it, we have one of the great chapters of the word of God and one of the great experiences in the word of God in which God delivered those three men from the fiery furnace. He brought them through to the place where even Nebuchadnezzar praises the Lord God of Shadrack, Meshack, and Abendigo.

Now we said we are going to take this "from the foundation of the world" with slain. If that is true, then what John is saying is that the sacrifice of the Lamb of God lay hidden in the heart of God from all eternity expressing His eternal purpose. The Son of God slain from the foundation of the world. Obviously, He was slain in time, in Jerusalem. But in the mind of God, in His eternal purpose, it was all what He determined

to come to pass. He was slain from the foundation of the world in the heart of God from all eternity.

Then we have the counsel that was given in the last two verses of the section, "If any man has an ear, let him hear." We commented upon the fact that seven times in chapters 2 and 3 we read the expression, "If any man has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "To the churches," is not here. This is one of the reasons that individuals believe that this time the church will not be upon the earth. We acknowledge that that is an argument that one may use for that particular position. We don't have time to deal with it. We have five minutes, but we'll just call attention to it, as it is a legitimate point.

He says in the 10<sup>th</sup> verse, "If anyone is destined to captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints." I understand this to mean that this is not a promise of victory that they are receiving. This rather, is an expression of warning and admonition to the saints of that time not to resist they are to follow in the way of our Lord, who also did not resist. This is Satan's hour. Just as the cross was Satan's hour in the power of darkness, so this is Satan's hour in the power of darkness. And they are called to persevere in those days because their victory lies in front of them.

Well, as we look at this chapter then and sum it up, one can see how important it is to heed the Messiah, not the antichrist. The word of God is our guide. The word of God is that upon which we stand. We stand upon the scriptures, and they reflecting the mind and the power and the glory of God, resting upon them we know that we should ultimately overcome. But as you look at this and think of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and the Book of Life, what glorious grace it is to sinners to know that there is a Lamb that has been slain and there is a Book of Life and that Lamb's Book of Life contains the names of those by whom God's grace has be brought to abandon any trust in themselves, in their church and their good works, and in their culture, their

education, and all of the things we like to put our trust in, and to acknowledge that we have no trust in any person but in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and the blood that was shed for sinners of whom we are among the chief ones.

Thomas Boston was a Scottish theologian and pastor for many years in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Mr. Boston, for twenty-five years, served in a little place on the borders of Scotland called, Ettrick, not far from Sir Walter Scotts, Abbotsford. Many of you have been to Scotland and you visited Abbotsford. You were pointed to Abbotsford has having great historic significance, but nearby is little Ettrick, where this man labored as pastor of that particular church for twenty-five years. Magnificent work he did. As a result of the preaching of the word of God by Thomas Boston, many were saved. In his last days, when he couldn't go to church, the people would gather around his house and they would open a window in his bedroom and he actually preached from his bedroom. I was thinking about that for Believer's Chapel. [Laughter] Maybe we could do it, but we wouldn't be able to get you in. But anyway, many people came and heard Thomas Boston.

Andrew Thomson said from Saint Adshead on the east to the remotest part of Galloway on the west, it was to be seen. That is the work, *Fourfold State*, his famous book that he wrote, it was to be seen side-by-side with the Bible and Bunyan on the shelf at every peasant's cottage. As a little boy, twelve years of age, Thomas Boston, heard the gospel. He describes it in his memoirs. He said he was twelve years of age, and those days incidentally, you never knew whether you could hear preaching or not, it depended on who was on the throne. If some where on the throne who did not favor the covenanting side, then of course, it was against the law to meet and to worship in those little places. But if one of them who was favorable to them was on the throne, then they could have their meetings. Well, his father took him at twelve years of age to hear a man by the name of Henry Erskine. He was the father of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine who made such a great impact upon Scotland later on.



And Boston said as he opened up the Scriptures on John 1:29, "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," he said, "by this I judge God's faith to me. I know I was touched to the quick by the first hearing wherein I was like one amazed by some new and strange thing. Sure, I was in good earnest, concerned for a saving interest in Jesus Christ. My soul went out after Him and the place of His feet was glorious in my eyes." Thus, in the words of Thomas Boston, the experience of salvation repeated often through the preaching of that text, meant eternal life for him. Incidentally, Mr. Boston believed so much that good sermons ought to be preached again that when he preached on John 1:29, he had a good sermon he thought, and he preached that sermon many times. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

We are reminded of Charles Wesley's words, "Happy if but with my latest breath I could but gasp His name, preach Him to all in crying death, behold, behold the Lamb." Those who have by God's grace been hidden in the Lamb by His saving sacrifice, in days such as the days of the antichrist, they have the place of protection from eternal wrath and judgment.

If you are here today and you never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we invite you to recognize your sin. No one can be saved who does not realize his need. To recognize your sin, to see that your sin is condemnatory, that you cannot survive eternally as a sinner having offended a holy God, that you need a Savior and that Christ has come as God's appointed Savior to die for sinners, and then recognizing that and recognizing what Christ has done, come to Him. Trust in Him. Stop trusting in your good works, your church, the ordinances, your education, your culture, anything else. Trust in Him. In trusting in Him, personally, your decision, God promises the gift of eternal life. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved." May God so work in your heart that you make that decision.

Let's bow for the benediction. Will you stand, please?

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful indeed for these magnificent words that Thou has given to us, words of admonition, words of warning, but also gathered around those marvelous words are words of grace. "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," how marvelous. Oh Father, if there is someone in this audience who has not yet spoken to Thee, confessing their need, throwing themselves upon the Redeemer, oh may at this very moment, they turn to Thee through Him, acknowledge their need, receive the free gift of eternal life. For Jesus' sake. Amen.