



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 15:1-8

"The Songs of Moses and The Lamb

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Returning to Revelation chapter 15, and so if you have your Bibles, or New Testaments, I hope you will turn there, and that you will follow along as I read these verses. John, again, sees three visions, to use his language. One in verse 1, one in verse 2, and then one in verse 5, just as in chapter 14. He saw three visions, and these visions are visions that have to do with the wrath that is to come. He writes in the 1st verse,

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues which are the last because in them, the wrath of God is finished. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mixed with fire: and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding the harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses, the man servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,"

Allow me to stop for just one moment. It is possible to understand these words, in verse 3 in the beginning, as expressing one song, but it is also possible, and perhaps truer to the grammar, to suggest that there are two songs. They sang the Song of Moses, the bond servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb. The fact that the definite article "the"

is repeated suggests too many interpreters that what we do have is two hims, but their very closely related, and we won't make a big point over that, except that the subject that we have taken is the Songs of Moses and the Lamb.

Now continuing with verse 3, "Those who sang the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Oh, Lord God the Almighty, righteous and true are thy ways thou King of the nations," these are magnificent titles of the Lord, God. He is the Lord God. He is the Almighty, this is the term that we have commented on previously. It's the term that, in the original text, suggests, simply by its derivation, the one who has his hands upon everything. So, it expresses his sovereignty very directly. "Righteous and true are thy ways thou King of the nations." There are different readings at the conclusion of verse 3. Some of the manuscripts have ages, and actually, there are some other readings as well, but we are taking the one, "King of the nations." "Who will not fear Oh Lord and glorify thy name, for thou alone are holy. For all the nations will come and worship before thee, for thy righteous acts have been revealed."

Now the third vision, "After these things I looked and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple clothed in linen clean and bright, and girded around their breasts with golden girdles." We've been saying, all along, that the Book of Revelation has a great deal of symbolism in it, and one can notice here things that suggest, by a symbol, some significant things about the seven angels: the fact that they are clothed in linen, clean and bright, suggests priestly garments, the fact that they are girded around their breasts with golden girdles suggests royalty. So, what we have, in a figure, is the figure of angels who are something like royal priests, who have authority from God to carry out judgment. And in the 7th verse, "And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever."

Now, these seven bowls will be the produce of the 16th chapter when the angels pour out these bowls in a worldwide judgment. Now the final verse, "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power and no one was able to enter the temple," (or the sanctuary) "until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished." That's a rather remarkable statement and suggests some interesting things. I'm not going to spend much time on it, but it recalls one of the statements that Jeremiah makes in the lamentations. I know that most Christians don't make lamentations their favorite book.

And so, you may have skipped over this particular statement, but in chapter 3 and verse 44 Jeremiah writes, "Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, so that no prayer should pass through," suggesting that there are times when God is disturbed over the activities of his people and consequently, because of their sins, they are unable to reach him. That seems to be the thought here. "The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished." That may be the suggestion of that. We've been saying all along that the God presented in the Book of the Revelation is not simply a God of love but also a God of wrath. And I hope as you've followed along, that you too have clearly seen that. It's something that's very important for us to see if we are to understand the God whom we worship.

May the Lord bless this reading of the word, and let's turn now to the Lord in prayer:

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the word of God which thou hast given to us. How bereft of understand of reality would we be we had no inspired Scriptures from Thee. As we think, Lord, of the products of human reason, of our philosophers and philosophers of religion and psychologists and sociologists and others, we think how filled with poverty would we be, spiritually speaking. We thank Thee for the light that

thou hast given to us through Holy Scripture. We thank Thee particularly for our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the chief theme of the word of God. From beginning to end, they speak of him, in the spirit, and of Thee.

We thank Thee, Lord for all the light that Thou hast given to us. We give Thee special thanks that Thou hast opened our minds to the truth of God and brought us to worship Thee. We praise Thy name. We exalt Thee Lord, our Savior, God through Jesus Christ, and we pray that in the day that Thou hast placed us upon this earth that we may be faithful in the testimony to Thee, in the tasks that thou hast given to each one of us to perform. We know Lord that all of the callings that are represented by the different people in this auditorium are important to Thee, and we pray that we may recognize our calling, and, by Thy grace and power, carry it out that Thy name may be honored and glorified.

We thank Thee Lord for the day in which we live and for the opportunities of it. We pray for our country, for the whole church of Jesus Christ, over whom our Lord exists as the head. Bless each individual member, young and old. May, in each heart, there be the drawing of the Holy Spirit to worship Thee more fully and completely. And Father, we thank Thee for this local body of believers. We pray Thy blessing upon our leaders, our elders, and our deacons. We pray that Thou will bless the membership, and the friends, and the visitors who are here with us today. And in this season of the year, Lord, may the opportunities that we have to testify to our Lord be taken and be used.

We pray Thy blessing upon our meeting here now. May the hymn that we sing glorify Thy name. May we sing from the heart to the glory of Christ. Bless the ministry of the word that follows, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today was mentioned in the reading of the Scriptures, the Songs of Moses and the Lamb. Many years ago in *Time* magazine, there was a very interesting letter written to the editor as one of the letters of the periodical, and this

particular one was especially interesting to me because it came from the religious editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. He went on to make comment about the editor of the *Christian Century*, who had had some words to say in one of the previous editions of *Time*, a man by the name of Hutchinson. And he had made the point, that in regard to fifty years of Protestant preaching, that the doctrine of sin was one of the great themes of present day, and the religious editor of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote a reply to that. And he said, "May I register my agreement with *Christian Century's* editor Hutchinson on most of his points in regard to fifty years of Protestantism.

However, as to his point regarding Protestant preaching that is that the pulpit speaks from Romans 7:19, 'For the good that I would do, I do not, but the evil which would not that I do.' I have found differently. We publish extracts from two local sermons each week as part of our religious coverage." Incidentally, our news papers don't do that anymore, but the *Times* forty years ago did that. He said, "In the period of a year, I have run across only one minister preaching man's innate sinfulness. On the other hand, at least seven of ten sermons published contain some form of the message, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, etc.'!" The etc. is part of the editorial. But it's striking to me that Mr. Hutchinson, who is a liberal editor of the liberal periodical *Christian Century*, should say that Protestant preachers were characterized by preaching on sin. And he said that is not true at all, they rarely did then, and they surely are not today.

I can remember, also about twenty or so years ago, I was speaking at an evangelistic banquet, and after my message on "Who was Jesus Christ," a young man, brought by another young man hoping he would hear the Gospel, said that, in a question addressed to me, he could not understand how anyone could believe in eternal punishment. And in seeking to answer him, I had made reference to the fact that the Lord Jesus gave us most of our information on the subject of hell. And I think I've mentioned that already once or twice in recent weeks, that of the passages in the New

Testament that refer to Gehenna, or hell, our Lord Jesus refers to everyone but one. So, that the term hell, or Gehenna, suggesting the lake of fire, is a special teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I made the comment to him, in the case of the Kingdom of God upon the earth that the guilt that existed that brought our Lord back in judgment still existed one thousand years later in the rebellion that takes place at the conclusion of the kingdom period.

Many other things could have been said. I don't think I said them, but many other things could have been said. Sometimes when individuals speak of eternal punishment, they are inclined to receive objections along the line of, "If God eternally punishes sin, then how can we say that God is really a merciful being? But the idea that we must, because God is God, expect our God to be willing to pardon sin at any time, is not necessary to the idea of mercy. I will pardon your sin today if you will penitently confess it, but not tomorrow, is a perfectly merciful thing to say for a sovereign being. So, the idea that he must always keep the door open is something that is not true to the mercy of God.

It cannot be said, unless he offers a pardon to man forever and ever, he is not a merciful being. Nor can it be said, if he confines redemption to this life and does not redeem sinners in the intermediate state, that he's not merciful. This is the time. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the accepted time. And God, in his sovereignty, mercifully opens the door that sinners might be delivered from their sin. And the fact that he says the door will ultimately be closed does not mean that he is not merciful. He didn't have to open it at all.

Please remember that, and furthermore, if we speak about eternal punishment, let us remember the idea of “guilty for a particular time” is not Christian. That is more in harmony with the theology that suggests that we may, through a purgatory, have our sins removed in life beyond the grave, guilty for ten days or guilty for a particular time is not biblical. As a matter of fact, as long as the reason for guilt exists then the punishment

exists. In other words, all suffering in the next life, of which the sufficient and justifying reason is guilt, must continue as long as the reason, the guilt continues. And the guilt, the reason is everlasting. We have sinned against an everlasting being, and we will be just as guilty a million years from now as we are today because the reason for the guilt has not changed. We have sinned against an eternal being. It's helpful for us to think for a while about some of these things because that's why the Scriptures set forth beside the mercy, and grace, and love of our Savior God, his wrath as well.

Now, we are looking at the Songs of Moses and the Lamb, and these chapters that we are looking at here, chapters 15 and 16, in the weeks ahead, are an expansion of chapter 11 and verse 19 and give details of what our author has called, "the third woe." We won't go back to the details. We'll save that for a little later. But it's very interesting to note that much background to the final series of judgments is given in chapters 12, 13 and 14, perhaps indicating how significant they are. You remember that there are three series of judgments in the Book of Revelation. There is the series of the seal judgments.

We have looked at them in chapters 6 through chapter 8 and verse 1. Then there is the series of trumpet judgments, and they begin in chapter 8 and verse 2 and continue to chapter 11, verse 19. And then the final series, the bowl judgments, to which these angels in chapter 15 will introduce us, these make up the final series of judgments and each of these three series of judgments, seals, trumpets, and bowls, declare the severity of the wages of sin. It's so important that we realize how significant it is when we sin against a Holy God.

Now there is some parenthesis between the 6th and 7th seal. And there is parenthesis between the 6th and 7th trumpet. But there is no parenthesis between the 6th and 7th bowl because these are the final series of judgments.

Now let's look at our three visions in chapter 15 and expound this particular section as anticipating the bowl judgments that follow. First, John tells us of the vision of the seven plague angels. He has three visions, verse 1, verse 2, and then verse 5. And

each of them, he begins with, "I saw." So now in verse 1, the vision of the seven plague angels, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues which are the last because in them, the wrath of God is finished." "The last" refers to the completion of God's warnings, the completion of his wrath upon the world in its physical manifestation, not the completion of the wrath of God in its spiritual manifestation. That will continue until the ages of the ages. But for its physical manifestation and the judgments that fall upon us of a physical type, then this particular series will be the completion of that wrath.

Later on, the judgment of the great white throne will make it plain that wrath continues until the ages of the ages. And then, in verse 2 through 4, he speaks of the second of the visions, the vision of the over comers, perhaps anticipatory of the victorious remnant referred to in chapter 12 since the number of them is not given. But let me make a comment or two about one or two things that are stated here. He says in verse 2, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mixed with fire." Now, evidently, the point of these symbols is to express the fact that the individuals who have come off victorious from the beast are individuals who have passed through judgment. In verse 3, he says, "They sang the song of Moses, the bond servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying," and then he gives us what is the content of that song. I think its very interest that he calls it the song of Moses.

Now you may remember that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt and passed through the Red Sea, when they reached the other side, they sang a song which was called, "the Song of Moses." It's in Exodus chapter 15. You needn't turn there, I'll read the verses. "Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord and said 'I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.'" A number of things make up that song. It is, however, important to note that in verse 20 of Exodus 15 we read,



"And Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambour in her hand, and all the women went out after her, with tambour and with dancing. Miriam answered them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.'"

Now, it's not surprising then, in the light of that great song that was sung by the children of Israel when they were able to pass through the Red Sea by the power of God that song should be remembered and be attached to Moses. But there is another song that Moses was given by God which he was told that the children of Israel should pay special attention to. And that song is found in Deuteronomy 32 verse 1 through verse 43. So, I'm going to ask you, if you will, to take your Bibles and turn to Deuteronomy chapter 32, and I want to make a comment or two about this particular song because I consider this to be the primary thing that is in view in Revelation chapter 15.

Now, Moses is told in chapter 31 that the time of his death is drawing near. Many of us might not like to know that, but nevertheless, in Moses' case God spoke to him, and in chapter 31 and verse 14 he said to Moses, "Behold the time for you to die is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting that I may commission him." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting. So, God tells Moses, "You are soon to die." Now what he tells Moses is that Israel is to be taught a song. And they are to be taught the song, and they are not to forget this song because it is important. In verse 19 we read, "Now therefore write this song for your selves and teach it to the sons of Israel. Put it on their lips in order that this song may be a witness for me against the sons of Israel." Then, in verse 21, Moses is told,

"Then it shall come about when many evils and troubles have come upon them that this song will testify before them as a witness for it shall not be forgotten from the

lips of their descendents for I know their intent that they are developing today before I have brought them into the land which I swore."

In other words, God says, "Moses the children of Israel are already in their heart turning away from me. Now this is something that you are to teach them, and they are not to forget it in order that it may be a witness to them of their sin. In verse 22, we read, "So Moses wrote the song the same day and taught it to the sons of Israel." And in verse 30, as he begins to tell us precisely what it is, we read, "Then Moses spoke in the hearing of the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were complete."

Now this is a very fitting thing and as the great servant of God is passing off the scene, Israel is reminded of what God has done for them. It is something that's not to be forgotten. And furthermore, it's something that pertains to the latter days, that's important. Verse 29 says,

"For I know," (Moses is talking now) "For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you and evil will befall you in the latter days" (an expression that always in its use in the Old Testament includes the last days before the Advent of our Lord to the earth.) "For you will do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger with the work of your hands."

In other words, Israel has no excuse. They not only have a nature derived from the fall in the Garden of Eden, but they are told by God through Moses that they are, even at this moment, turning away from him. But he in his marvelous grace is giving them this magnificent song, what has been called a rehearsal of God's dealings with them from the beginning all the way to the end. And furthermore, to emphasize the fact that I think this is what the Book of Revelation includes in its song that these angelic beings sing, is the fact that the 4th verse of Deuteronomy 32, "The rock, his work is perfect, all

his ways are just, a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is he," is found in Revelation chapter 15. So, chapter 15 of the Book of Revelation builds upon Deuteronomy 32.

This is such a magnificent prophecy. I've often spent an hour expounding this prophecy, and then at the conclusion of it said I wish I had two or three. It's so rich. David Baron, a Hebrew Christian once said with reference to it, "It is a divine forecast of the whole history of the Jewish people." *Sifre*, a Rabbinic work, older actually than the Talmud, says, "How great is this song. In it is to be found the present, the past, the future, and the events of the age to come."

Now, obviously, we cannot expound all of these verses, but let me just summarize what is stated. The song, after the description of the occasion in chapter 31, begins with its theme as God's perfection in his work and in his ways, and perhaps the important text is verse 4, "The rock, his work is perfect." That word "rock" is the Hebrew word *tsuwr*. And it, itself is not used as a name of God until Deuteronomy chapter 32. It first occurs in the Hebrew Bible in Exodus chapter 17 where the rock in Horeb is smitten, which "rock" we are told in the New Testament is Christ. From that time, we find that many names of the leaders of Israel embody this confession.

You'll find a man by the name of Elitsur, which means, "My God is a rock," or *Tsuwr-shaddai*, which means, "The Almighty is my rock," and even *padab-tsuwr*, from the verb that means "to redeem," and "tsur," redeemed by the rock. So the term, "the rock" becomes a characteristic term for the God of the Bible, "the rock". And you'll remember that in the Psalms, we have in the 62nd Psalm, two times, the statement, "He only is my rock and my salvation." Mr. Spurgeon use to like to say, "Tell me anything that departs from this, and it will be a heresy," anything that does not agree with, "He only is my rock and my salvation." Underline that only, He only is my rock and my salvation. So, tell me anything that departs from this, and it will be a heresy. And tell me a heresy,

and I shall find its essence right here that it has departed from this great fundamental, this rocky truth.

He only is my rock and my salvation. It's just another way of saying salvation is of the Lord. What a magnificent text that is. He only is my rock and salvation, not he and my free will, but he only is the rock of my salvation, not he and the doctrine of contingency or conditionality, so popular in evangelicalism today. No, he only is my rock and my salvation. Our salvation is found only in our great triune God, no works of any kind may be rested upon for eternal salvation.

So he talks about God's perfection in his work and in his ways. He then talks about God's goodness in election of the nation of Israel in the 7th through the 9th verses. We don't have time to look at that, talks about how he guided them through the wilderness, how he brought them miraculously into the land. He talks about the perversity of Israel, what they did against this God, who was doing so much for them. He then speaks of the judgments upon Israel because they have provoked him, and the description of them goes all the way into the future and the great tribulation period that lies ahead. In verses 19 through 25, he has recounted here the pleadings of the divine mercy.

In fact, you have God's view of false religion here. There rock is not like our rock. The rock of the false teachers is not like our rock. Our rock is the genuine rock. And then from verse 34 on through to the end of the song, he talks about the apocalyptic events, the way in which God poses himself and his judgments in the history of the nation Israel, but it all winds up on the note of his faithfulness.

Look at the 43rd verse of Deuteronomy 32. In this great song of mercy of God, "Rejoice, O nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; and will render vengeance on his adversaries and will atone for his land," (the Authorized Version says, 'He will be merciful to his land and people.')." In other words, when the whole story of God winds down, what we will have is God merciful to his nation to whom he

has given the unconditional promises of the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the new covenants, and he will install them in possession of the promises of the Lamb in the fullness of the divine justification from the rock, and specifically, of course, through the ministry of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the propitiation which he has offered on Calvary's cross.

It's a magnificent Psalm. You'll notice another thing, it's called the Song of the Lamb, and I think I can understand that because underlying it all is the work of the Lamb of God. They sing of God's works. They sing of God's ways, and if you'll read through these verses of the Psalm, you will find there is not a single word about their victory, not a single word about their work, not a single word about their cooperation with God so that they are blessed. The whole emphasis rests upon the Lord, God as the rock of salvation.

The final vision in verses 5 through 8 is the vision of the opened temple. There was no smoke when the tabernacle was opened, but we read here of smoke that comes out of the sanctuary in this great vision. And when we read that the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, we are probably to understand by this God's presence acting in judgment. And the individuals, who are there, the plague angels, are clothed in garments that suggest they are royal priests of judgment. And as I mentioned in the Scripture reading, the fact that no one was able to enter suggests that the sanctuary is closed until the plagues are over. Judgment is sure to come. So, he is our rock, and he is alone or rock.

There is a marvelous incident in the life of Augustus Montague Toplady. Toplady was born in 1740. His father was a Major and was killed in the war in Spain, which left him an only son, I believe. He had never seen his son, but left this son in the care of his mother. The boy, after spending some time at Westminster School went to live in Ireland, and there he attended Trinity College in Dublin. He was holidaying with his mother one vacation, and he overheard some people singing in a barn nearby, and so Toplady went

over to hear the people singing in the barn. They were just simple folk. He stayed, and he heard a very uneducated man speak on Ephesians 2:13, "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." He admitted afterwards readily that he was a changed man from that time, and he wrote these words, "Strange that I should meet God in an obscure part of Ireland midst a handful of people met together in a barn and by the ministry who could scarcely spell his own name. Surely, it was the Lord's doing, and it was marvelous. It cannot be of man. It is of God."

And then later when he was curate in charge in the Parish of Blagdon, near Mendip range, in the west country, about eight miles from Wells, he was very fond of taking walks down the lanes of that beautiful part of England, and on one occasion, he was walking in a rocky glen of Burrington Combe, and he was overtaken by a severe thunderstorm, and looking around for a refuge, he could find nothing suitable in sight, but a great split down the granite rock of the bank near him. He climbed into the fissure, and he was completely sheltered, and as he watched the vivid lightning and heard the roar of the thunder, he formed in his own mind, he said the words of the great hymn, "Rock of ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee. Let the blood from Thy riven side which flowed be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power." Included in it are the words, you'll remember, "Nothing in my hand I bring simply to Thy cross I cling."

What I'm leading up to is something that has to do with a man whose name is my name. Samuel Johnson, that's the way the IRS knows me. Nobody else knows me that way, but the IRS in their wonderfully, intimate way, [laughter] they know me as Samuel Johnson. And there was a famous Samuel Johnson, as you know, the great lexicographer, and the great author, and a remarkable man. The remarkable thing about Samuel Johnson, was, he lived, incidentally, at the same time that Toplady did, but they never met, so far as individuals know.

He was a man who was kind of like a colossus in the literary world of his day, but he was a man who was extremely religious, but at the same time received very little consolation from his religion, because he had ideas about truth that were biblical, but he did not have clear ideas about the mercy and grace of God. He believed very strongly in eternal punishment, even read William Law's *A Serious Call*, which had such an affect at one time on John Wesley. But he said, regarding Mr. Law's book, "It was an overmatch for me." He felt very much moved by the texts of Scripture that spoke of men's responsibility.

At one time when he was fifty years of age, he drew up resolutions to help him shape the days that were to come. And listen to his resolutions. They were, first to rise early on Sabbath morning, and then he said in order to do that, to go to sleep early on Saturday night. You know I've noticed that in our congregations and I notice it with me too. I can look out at some of our young people, they come, and I'm happy that they are here, of course, but I see them (he yawns) [laughter], now lots of times it's because of the preaching they hear. [Laughter] I realize that. But a lot of time it's because they didn't go to bed the night before. And Dr. Johnson was wise enough to say, if I'm going to get up and go to church on Sunday morning, I better go to bed early Saturday night. That was one of his resolutions.

Second was to use some more than ordinary devotion as soon as I rise, third, to examine the tenor of my life, particularly, the last week. And to mark my advances in religion, or my recessions from it, and fourth, to read the Scriptures methodically with such helps as are at hand, fifth to go to church twice, sixth, to read books of divinity, either speculative or practical, and seventh, to instruct my family, and eighth, to wear off, by meditation, any worldly soil contracted during the week. This is a man who obviously was very serious about his religion, but unfortunately it was a burden to him rather than a consolation to him. It reminds me of Isaiah, who spoke about the "God's of the heathen that you have to carry, rather than the God of him who carries us." Marvelous section in

Isaiah, in which Isaiah speaks of the difference between the gods that you have to carry and the God who carries you. That's all the difference between grace and works.

The text that meant so much to him, for a long time, was the text that has the words, "Of him to whom much is given, much will be required." He says that he believed in eternal punishment. "What do you mean by damned?" asked Dr. Adams of him. "Sent to hell, sir," replied Dr. Johnson, "and punished everlastingly. Death," he says, "is a terrible thing to face. The man who says he is not afraid of it lies. Yet murderers have met it bravely on the scaffold, when the time comes, so perhaps may I. In the mean time, I am horribly afraid the future is dark."

George Jackson, who was a professor at the time, when he read Samuel Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations*, a work that he wrote, said that it was such a moving little book, that he thought there was hardly anyone who could read such a book as that and not be touched to the quick by the great sad, sincerity of a soul which breathes through it's every page and at the same time without a sign of regret that there was not someone at hand who could have shown Johnson a more excellent way. "If only Toplady," he said, "could have taught him to sing, 'Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling,' what a difference it would have made. Religion would have been a bridge instead of a burden, something to carry him, instead of something for him to carry."

What is interesting, in the light of that, is to read about Samuel Johnson's death. When the time came, at age seventy-five or so, for him to die, his doctor was by his side. He asked the doctor, "Is there any chance of recovery?" and he said, "Give me a faithful answer." And the doctor told him the truth. Then, said Johnson, "I will take no more physic, not even my opiates, for I desire to render up my soul to God unclouded." For some time before his death, Dr. Brocklesby said, "All his fears were calmed, he talked to me about the necessity of faith, and the sacrifice of Jesus as necessary, beyond all good works whatever, for the salvation of mankind. He pressed me to study Dr. Clark and to read his sermons. And I asked him why he especially commended Dr. Clark, and he



replied, 'It's because Dr. Clark made most of Christ's redeeming sacrifice.' He sent for his servant, and he told his servant, 'attend Frank, above all else, to the salvation of your soul. That is of supreme importance.'

And he took communion just before he died and before doing, he lifted up his voice that was trembling in prayer, and this was his prayer, listen to it, 'Almighty and most merciful Father, I am now, as to human eyes it seem, about to commemorate for the last time the death of my redeemer. Grant, oh Lord, that my whole hope and confidence may be in his merits and Thy mercy, in force and accept my imperfect repentance and make the death of Thy son effectual for my redemption. Pardon the multitude of my offenses. Support me in the hour of death, and receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.'" The author commenting upon it says, "What is this but the tempest, tossed soul, clinging to the rock of ages." "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling." In his death his face was turned toward the sunrise after all. He found the truth that bore him, instead of that which was the burden. And even Toplady could have taught him nothing more than that.

You know, when we read a great chapter, like chapter 15 of the Book of Revelation, which one might think is a very difficult chapter because it speaks of the wrath of God, one of the reasons, is that it is designed to turn us toward ourselves to ask ourselves where we stand with reference to the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ and specifically where we stand with the Lamb, the Lamb of God who gave himself for the sins of the world. Perhaps you will say, "Well the Lamb of God saved some people, but he could hardly save me because I'm just a bond slave to sin." But that's why he's the Lamb of God. It's because he gives deliverance to those who are in the bonds of sin. Or perhaps you say, "I'm just a black sinner," but in the death of Christ is the blood that washes us of our guilt.

Or if you say, "I'm condemned," but in the sacrifice of Christ is the equivalent and the gift of righteousness that is sufficient for us to stand in the presence of a Holy God,

possessed of the righteousness that satisfies him. Or maybe you just say, "I'm totally dead." Well, he's the Son of God who gives life. There is no hope, my friends, except in the saving sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the time will come, if Jesus Christ does not return, for each one of us to lie by our bedside, with life draining out of our bodies, physical life, and the question that the Scriptures pose to each one of us, young and old, is, "In whom is your faith and trust for the future?" May God, in his grace, cause us to turn to him and recon upon his saving sacrifice of the Son of God to recognize the fact that we cannot of ourselves move one step toward heaven.

But Christ has made it possible for us to have assurance of eternal life. What a joy, what a privilege it is to know that we have the forgiveness of sins. May God, in his grace, touch your heart, bring you to acknowledge your sin, to recognize Christ as the Savior of sinners, flee to him, and receive freely the forgiveness of sin. Not by any works that you have done, religious or otherwise, but simply through grace. He only is our rock and our salvation. May that be your testimony. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are indeed grateful to Thee that the Scriptures contain not simply great promises, but great admonitions. For we by nature are so turned away from Thee that we need those admonitions and warnings to cause us to turn toward our great, loving, merciful Father in heaven.

Lord, if there are some in this auditorium who have never believed in Christ, may, at this very moment, they turn to Thee, confess their need, confess their sin, confess Christ, the Savior, in whom they are trusting and pass from death to life, from darkness to his light, his marvelous light. Go with us as we part in Jesus name. Amen.