

Daniel 06-01-08b

Let's pick up our study now in the book of Daniel. We're going to move rather quickly and this lesson will be slightly shorter than usual. So you want to make the best use of the abbreviated time.

If you know God's going to shorten the days of the end time, I guess we could shorten a lesson related to the end time. As we look at Daniel chapter seven, we have already seen that there is a vision that Daniel sees in the night and then there is an interpretation of that vision given to him by God through the agency of the one who accompanies him. So in the reaction to this night vision, we saw the throne of the ancient of days and we talked about that atik word translated ancient, but really meaning removed from.

I wanted to give you one other passage where that word occurs. If I can get to it here, the word atik is also found in Chronicles and it's a very fascinating and illuminating use there. First Chronicles 4.22, it's important for us to understand if we're going to use a title for God, like ancient of days, as I mentioned last week, we want to be sure we understand what we're saying.

This title has given rise to the image of God as being this ancient, gray bearded figure, sort of old, and that's not the idea at all. If you look at First Chronicles chapter four, beginning in the vicinity of verse 10 or so, you see that this is the prayer of Jabez section. Jabez was more honorable.

Jabez called on the God of Israel, bless me, enlarge my territory, blah, blah, blah. But this is the sort of begats section talking about the tribe of Judah. You find this out by going all the way back up to verse four, Penueh, the father of Gedor, Ezer, the father of Hushah, these were the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, the father of Bethlehem.

Bethlehem, Ephrathah, you're familiar with that. These are the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, it goes on all through. You have Jabez in that line.

You go on down to verse 11, you have Kelub, and then verse 13, the sons of Kenaz, Othniel, and Saraiah. The sons of Othniel were Hathath, Maonathai, who begot Ophrah, not Oprah, but close. Saraiah begot Joab, the father of Geharashim, for they were craftsmen.

The sons of Kelub, the son of Jephunneh, Eru, Elah, and Naam. The son of Elah was Kenaz. The sons of Jehalelel were Ziph, Ziphah, Teriah, and Aserel.

The sons of Ezra were Jether, Mered, Ephraim, and Jalon. Mered's wife bore Miriam, Shammai, and Ishba, the father of Eshtemoah. Eshtemoah shows up later as well.

His wife, Jehudiah, bore Jared, the father of Gedor, Heber, the father of Soko, and Jekuthah. I wish we had time to go through. This sounds boring, but it's just interesting as all get out.

But that's not why we're here. These were the sons of Bethiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. And you've got the whole intermarriage with the daughter of Pharaoh, sons of Hodiah's wife, and so on.

You have all this going on. Skip down to verse 21. The sons of Shelah, the son of Judah, were Ur, the father of Lekah, La'adah, the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of the linen workers of the house of Ashbeah.

Joachim, the men of Kozeba, Joash, Seraph, who ruled in Moab, and Jashubi Lechem. Now, the records are ancient. They were the potters and those who dwelt at Netaim and Gedera.

They dwelt with the king for his work. What do you think the word is that's translated ancient there? Atik. What is he saying here? You notice all of that verbiage I read up above about the sons of Ephrathah and all of the detail that went into.

Well, Judah's son Shelah is famous, equally interesting, right? You have Ur, the father of Lekah, La'adah, the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of the linen workers of the house of Ashbeah, Joachim, the men of Kozeba, and Joash, Seraph, who ruled in Moab, and Jashubi Lechem. And then we get no more information. Where's all the rest of the verses like we had up above? Well, at this point, the records are removed.

The records are no longer in existence. They're not available. The records have been drawn away.

Somebody borrowed the book from the library and didn't bring it back. The tablet fell off the back of the wagon and we don't have it anymore. At this point, the records are withdrawn.

My records run out. I don't have them anymore. He's not saying the records are old.

What is that? That doesn't mean anything. Of course, they're as old as the people that are being spoken of. That doesn't communicate any information.

At this point, the records are missing. At this point, the records are not subject to retrieval and copying. Atik.

At this point, the records are atik. This ought to give us great insight into the ancient of days, the atik of days. He's removed.

He's not subject to the days. He's not contained within the days. Sits outside the days.

Is drawn above and beyond. We saw the other use of atik. Those drawn from the breast, those removed from the breast.

The records have been removed. They're not here. I can't copy them down.

I'm sorry. The chronicler says. Okay, well, back to Daniel.

The ancient of days is seated. His garment is white as snow. The hair of his head is like pure wool thrown to fiery flame.

Wheels burning fire. Fiery stream issues came from before him. Thousand thousands minister.

Ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. The court is seated and the books are opened. The court is seated and the books are opened.

Now, Daniel says, I watched because of the sound of the pompous words, which the horn was speaking. You already told us about the beasts and the horns and all of that. I watched till the beast was slain, his body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

The rest of the beast, they had dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. A season and a time. We remember the language of a time, times and half a time.

This is our understanding of the expression of one year, a time being one year in that particular context. A time is one year, times is two years and a half a time is a half, making a total of three and a half years. The first half of the tribulation period, last half of the tribulation period, speaking of that 70th week period.

So does a time then always mean one year? No, it doesn't. And if you look at the word for time here, it is used in a variety of ways. Its meaning, like so many other words, is determined by context.

This time and a season is not really determinative, but a time is of long duration. A season is of shorter duration. You can have four seasons in a year.

A time can mean a lot of things. The passage goes on in verse 21 to say, I was watching. So I say all that to say that a time and a season doesn't really tell us a specific measure of time.

I would argue that the time is basically the thousand years of the millennial kingdom. And the season is that unique period at the end of the Gog Magog rebellion where you have the continuation, of course, of the influence of those civilizations and those cultures and their technology and their language and all the rest of it. But that season is set apart from the rest of the time because most of the time is the field, which is the world, having the wheat and the tares growing together in Jesus' parable.

And then there is that time at the end where those things which offend have to be gathered out and the tares are gathered out and you have that season. And all the way up until the end, all the way until the elements melt with the fervent heat and until the earth and heavens are rolled up like a scroll and the new heavens and the new earth and the kingdom of the Father come in, all the way until the end, the time and the season, we're going to see the continuation of human civilization and its attainments, its cultural and technological advances. They're going to continue.

That's what it's talking about here. These kingdoms continue for a time and a season. I was watching in the night visions, one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven, came to the Ancient of Days, they brought him near before him.

Then to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom. This is exactly the point we covered Friday night in Revelation, after the seventh bowl is poured out and the bowl angel comes and talks to John and tells him, you remember that beast that was and is not and is going to ascend again out of the bottomless pit. And they are standing on the threshold of the kingdom where the Lord Jesus has come and the city is split into three parts.

You remember that? Well, this is the point in Daniel's vision from another perspective. The son of man comes with the clouds of heaven, comes to the Ancient of Days, they bring him near. He is given dominion, glory and a kingdom that all people's nations and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed. Every other kingdom on the planet is destroyed.

Jesus' kingdom is not destroyed, but it will be concluded. But the conclusion of the kingdom of Christ is not in destruction. Every other kingdom, look at the seven kingdoms represented by the seven heads, look at the four kingdoms represented by the four beasts, every one of those kingdoms was destroyed.

Egypt was destroyed, Assyria was destroyed, Babylon was destroyed, Medo-Persia was destroyed, Greece was destroyed, Rome was destroyed. The revived Roman Empire will be destroyed by Jesus Christ himself. The only kingdom to ever exist on this planet that will not be destroyed is Jesus' kingdom.

It will go until its time and its season has concluded and then it will finish, but it will not be destroyed. Look at verse 15, I, Daniel, this is where we pick up formally this morning. I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body and the visions of my head troubled me.

This is a very comforting verse to me. People tend to think, well, you know, the Word of God is alive and powerful and it's comforting and the Holy Spirit uses it and it builds me up and I'm excited. I take it into my mouth and it's sweet like honey.

And we forget that a lot of times the Word of God can trouble our mind. Daniel has received one of the greatest revelations of the Word of God ever to hit the mind of a human being, but he's not ecstatic. He is not rolling around doing the dying cockroach saying, praise God.

He is troubled. The visions of his head troubled him. And many times when we learn things from the Word of God, it will trouble us.

And this is great. This is a good thing because it stirs up our soul and it causes us to review the line upon line and the precept upon precept and the line upon line and the precept upon

precept here a little and there a little that we have learned in the course of our study and our pursuit of understanding of the Word of God. And to draw conclusions, to go through our chaos management steps.

We talked about a week and a few days ago. So Daniel was grieved and troubled by the Word of God. Don't feel bad if the Word of God grieves and troubles you.

It often grieves and troubles me. But we shouldn't persist in that state. Or if we are going to be grieved and troubled, we shouldn't think that there's something wrong in and of itself.

You know, then we feel bad because we're grieved and troubled. It's normal and natural. Many times the Word of God is going to do this.

So what does Daniel do? What is the solution when you're grieved and troubled by the Word of God? Daniel drew near to one of those who stood by and asked him the truth of all this. Now, he's not saying, is this really true? He's basically saying, I have seen this vision. I've seen this revelation.

I have an idea of what it means and it's deeply troubling and grieving to me. Give me the doctrine that is contained therein. Give me the timeless truth.

Help me to make that interpretive and applicational leap from what I have just seen from the Word of God. This is a legitimate request to make. We don't have to go to one standing by.

We can go to God Himself. Say, Lord, these truths are stirring around in my soul. And it may not be a completely depressing thing.

It may just be confusing. Maybe there's something we don't understand, something we're trying to work out and we have an ambition of a better understanding. We go to the Lord and we say, give me the truth.

Tell me the truth of all this. So he told me and look, made known to me the interpretation, observation, interpretation, then application. He made known the interpretation.

This is the meaning. Now we have a quote. Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.

But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. Now, as I have reminded all of us in just recent hours, this Bible in front of us is a Semitic book. It's an ancient Near Eastern collection of literature and it speaks in Semitic terms, as you have in Genesis chapter one and chapter two on the creation of man, as you have in Revelation, the last book of the Bible, where God tells you what he's going to tell you and then he goes back and gives you more detail.

Time and again, Jesus in his parables, he'll tell a parable and then the gospel account will go back and review that parable in greater detail and bring out the meaning. Notice here, this is

the summary. There are four great beasts, which are four kings that arise out of the earth.

But and now we're going to jump to the end. The saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom. Don't be troubled by the fact that these four kings rise up and seem to have dominion and hegemony and power and authority and rulership.

And you get the bear munching the ribs. You've got all of these different things. Don't worry about it.

Keep in mind the goal. Keep in mind that the end result is going to be the saints of God possessing the kingdom. You've got and what is this individual telling Daniel? Keep your perspective.

Keep things in perspective. Yes, there are going to be effusions. Yes, there are going to be prominences.

There are going to be things that arise and that seem to dominate and fill the landscape. Just remember, the saints of God are going to possess the kingdom. It's all going to turn out OK.

Wait on the Lord. Be of good cheer. He shall strengthen your heart.

So that's the summary. You've got some human kings now, but you're going to have the saints inheriting the kingdom later. That's the big picture.

Now he's going to go back in detail. I wished to know, Daniel says, the truth about the fourth beast, who is different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured broken pieces and trampled the residue with its feet and the ten horns that were on its head. And the other horn, which came up before which three fell, namely that horn, which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

You know what I get from verses 19 and 20? Daniel paid attention to detail. When God revealed this future scenario in a vision to Daniel, Daniel paid very close attention and he gives word for word the account of what he saw. He remembers exactly.

He leaves no detail out. There are the four beasts. This fourth beast is different from the others.

It's dreadful. It has teeth of iron, nails of bronze. These are details.

They do this in police academies all the time. You know, the first year class comes in and impromptu, they'll have the lecturer up there pointing at some boring chart or whatever. And then somebody will come in and perpetrate a crime.

Grab somebody out of the front row and stick a gun in their face and pull their wallet out and then run out of the room. And then the instructor will turn around and say, all right, now everybody break out a piece of paper and write down all of your observations about the crime

you just witnessed. And they have to go back and think now, what was he wearing? What kind of shoes? Did I see the color of his hair or his eyes? What was his build? How would I estimate his height and his weight? What did he do first? Did he pull the gun and then grab the guy's wallet? Did he grab the wallet and then pull the gun? Did he fire any shots? What kind of gun was it? Was it an automatic or a revolver, et cetera, et cetera.

How many details can they recall? And because to ascertain the truth, the more detail you have, the better. Small details can make a huge difference, can't they? It makes a big difference whether the knob on your barbecue grill is fully on or fully off. If you look at it, it's a very small difference.

There's one little mark that says fully on. There's another mark that says fully off. But if it's fully on and not lit, you're creating a hugely dangerous situation.

And it's just the difference of a 90 degree angle. Small details make a big difference. So as we look at the Word of God, we as a group try to pay attention to detail, don't we? Because every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, and righteousness.

So Daniel says, I wish to know the truth about the fourth beast, the ten horns and all these details. The horn that had eyes, the mouth that spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. Daniel says, I was watching.

I continued to watch. I didn't just look and then go away. I continued watching.

And the same horn was making war against the saints and prevailing against them. Until the ancient of days, the Atik Hayom, came and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High. And the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

What do you notice in verse 22? Now that I've touted the advantages of attention to detail, what do you notice there? Two words in italics, actually three. Two, I guess. In favor.

If you scratch out in favor, the italics tell you that's not in the original text. How does it read now? The ancient of days came and a judgment was made of the saints of the Most High. Right? We know this from our other studies, passing under the rod to determine who goes in and who does not go into the kingdom.

And the sanctified ones, the saints, what does saint mean? Sanctified one. Two different kinds of sanctification. There is salvation sanctification, meaning you are entered forever into relationship with God.

And there is living sanctification. There's daily sanctification, where we wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb. We claim the principles of Psalm 51 and 1 John 1. So, a judgment was made of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it, and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings, who shall arise from this kingdom, and another shall rise after them. He shall be different from the first, and shall subdue three kings.

We have this consistent witness, don't we? We saw the same thing in Revelation. He shall speak words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then they shall be given into his hand.

Notice the saints is in italics. Then they shall be given into his hand for a time, and times, and half a time. But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.

Then the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. This ought to call to mind some of our recent study in the book of Revelation. If you recall the content of the 13th, 14th, and 15th chapters, you remember that a time comes when the throne of God is in view, and thrones are set up, and judgment is reckoned, and this is when the end comes.

That's what you have here in Revelation chapter 13. The dragon that gave authority to the beast, the mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, authority to continue for 42 months. 42 months is a time, times, and half a time.

In 13.6 of Revelation, he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, blaspheming his name, his tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, were not written in the book.

So, the scene that we have here is reiterated and repeated by John in Revelation chapter 13. You have the pouring out of the bowl judgments in chapter 16 of Revelation, the revelation of the scarlet beast and woman that we have looked at in chapter 17, and that is this cork that is seated, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it forever. Notice the word it is in italics.

Cross it out. It is his dominion to consume and destroy, his power to consume and destroy, is going to be taken away forever. This language is very interesting in verse 25 where he speaks these words against the Most High, persecutes the saints, and intends to change times and law.

It says he intends to change times and law. Some people think this is what is known in literature as a hendieties, that the law regarding times. In either case, this beast, the Antichrist, intends, and the word intend there is a word that means to intend, to hope, to plan, to have as one's objective, and yet you get the idea that this objective and this intention and this hope is not fulfilled.

What is he specifically trying to change? The times and the law. But who is determining the

times? God has said you are going to endure for a time, times, and half a time. He wants to change the times.

He wants to change the law. He thinks he can do it. And this, of course, is the satanic inspiration of his whole program.

Satan thinks he can change the times and change the law. And the Antichrist is going to do the same thing. He says, I can beat this.

We've all wondered, I think, and some of you all have mentioned this explicitly, that it doesn't seem strange that with all of this prophecy, Satan and the Antichrist are going to still run out their string in the 70th week of Daniel. It's so clear what's going to happen and how it's going to happen and how it's going to conclude. Why would they bother? Well, they hope, they intend, they plan, they think there is a way to change the times and change the law, the mandate of God on how this is going to turn out.

And they think, well, so you say, God, but what you don't know is we're going to do this. And they think that they can prevail. So he thinks, he intends, he hopes to change the times.

But throughout this vision and throughout this communication from Daniel, you have who is in charge of the times. Right there it says, the saints will be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. But the court will be seated.

They will take away his dominion to consume and destroy, which is what he's doing to the saints, forever. Then the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

It is not subject to the times. And all dominions shall serve and obey him. God determines the seasons.

God determines the times. Anyone who thinks they can change the times, change the seasons, change the law, is literally spitting into a divine wind. You know what that is in Japanese, don't you? Divine wind? Kamikaze? That's what it means.

Then Daniel says, this is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me and my countenance changed, but I kept the matter in my heart. This is another great example.

Aside from all of the prophetic information that we're given here and the assurance of God's victory and God's kingdom that will never be taken away and the possession of the saints, Daniel continues to have thoughts that greatly trouble him. And it is so troubling that it changes his appearance. It changes his countenance, but he kept it in his heart.

And this is also an important point of application for us. When we come to the Word of God and

we come to understand its truth, the truth is revealed to us, the interpretation is impressed upon us, and we recognize where we are in the plan and purpose of God. We recognize where we are in history.

We recognize that our country is on the skids. We recognize that the judgment of God is coming and many people will not repent. You hit them with 66-pound hailstones and they will not change their mind.

And trust me, if there are people who are not convinced by these huge conflagrations and judgments from God, our powers of persuasion are not going to be any more effective. God the Holy Spirit has come and approached them and convicted them. They don't respond.

God judges in a very dramatic and physical way and they don't respond. Don't be overly depressed that our efforts are ineffective. Don't be surprised that those who hate the Lord Jesus Christ are going to hate us.

Those who hate what he stands for, who want to corrupt and pervert and distort and diminish and minimize Jesus Christ and his truth and his word are going to do the same to us. They are going to corrupt and distort and minimize and pervert and have a really nauseatingly bad attitude toward us, just as they have toward Jesus Christ. And you can expect that there would be a problem if people didn't like Jesus but thought you were great.

What's the matter with us that we're not Christ-like enough to receive the same kind of scorn that he receives? So, this is the way of the world, but we are assured from beginning to end, you have it bracketed in verse 18 and again in verse 27, the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom. It is imperative that you and I be those sanctified ones who are qualified to receive the kingdom. Now, these particular sanctified ones are the people of Israel and that's the immediate audience and the immediate object at which we direct our attention.

But the principle is the same. If you want to inherit, if you want to reflect God's glory, if you want to be useful and fulfill potential, we have to stick with it. We have to be patient.

We have to be looking at the goal. Yes, it will be discouraging. Yes, our hearts will be grieved and troubled, even by the truth of the Word of God.

It can be sweet in our mouth and bitter in our stomach, just as it was for John. But, what does Daniel do? How does this chapter conclude? I kept the matter in my heart. Just because it was troubling, just because it was grievous, just because it was uncomfortable, I didn't just push it away and say, well, I'm going to do the Scarlet O'Hara here.

I'll think about that tomorrow. Daniel kept it in his heart. He kept thinking about it and working on it, praying over it, inquiring into it.

There are two kinds of people in the world and it's not those with guns and those who dig, as Clint Eastwood tends to say. There are seekers and there are non-seekers. There are those who

read Proverbs 2 and see it as an exciting challenge.

And there are those who read Proverbs 2 and see it as needless obfuscation of the truth and what's the matter with God that He doesn't just come out and speak plainly. Remember how the Pharisees came to Jesus and said, look, if you're the Son of God, just tell us plainly. Jesus said, look, the works speak for themselves.

What you have seen speaks for itself. It's as plain as it gets. And for someone to say, well, come on and speak plainly when you've been speaking plainly for three years tells you that it's not a matter of being plain spoken.

It's a matter of people who will not hear, who will not see. And God talked about those people and He said, the heart of this people has been calloused over, seeing they see and do not perceive, hearing they hear and do not comprehend. It is a willful suppression of the truth.

Paul talks about it in Romans 1. The wrath of God is revealed to heaven against men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. The old King James says, who hold the truth. Well, there are two different ways you can hold the truth.

You can either suppress the truth and push it away or you can do what Daniel does here. I kept the matter in my heart. It's like a bitter pill.

It may be hard to swallow, but you know it's good for you so you don't spit it out, you keep it. And that's what we need to do with the Word of God. It's not always comforting and pleasant.

Sometimes it's convicting and grievous and troublesome to our soul. But the seeker will recognize that there is an ultimate objective in view that is good. There is possession of the kingdom by the sanctified ones of God.

That's the goal. And anything that gets me to that goal is worth it. In closing, I'll give you a quick illustration.

I heard a pastor talking this morning, a pastor of my acquaintance actually, about a health problem that one of his sons had. When he was a child, he was just about a year old, they thought he had that bone disease. You've seen these kids that look really old and they only live to be about 9 or 10.

The term for the disease means something like ancient bones. But their bones age way ahead of their chronological age and they wind up getting all brittle and they look like little wizened old people and they're only 8 or 10 years old. They thought his son had this syndrome, had this disease.

And the only way to find out for sure was to take him to the hospital and run him through a battery of tests. And basically, among other things, they had to induce a diabetic coma and they had to do a lot of other very painful things. And so they took their son in and a one-year-old

knows his parents and knows where he is and sits up and looks around and so on.

And so the doctors and the staff asked the pastor and his wife to leave the room and go down the hall. And they said, well, we want to be with him. And they said, no, you don't.

He is going to scream. He is going to be in intense discomfort. And it's just going to make it worse if you hear it, you have to leave.

And so they left and went out and sat in the hall. Well, then they began this necessary procedure. And their son was screaming and crying and just yelling himself hoarse and crying out for his mother and crying out for his father.

And it got to the point where the father couldn't take it anymore. And he stood up and he said to his wife, Debbie, he said, Debbie, I'm going in there. And she stood up and she said, no, you're not.

And he said, yes, I am. And she said, let me tell you something. He said to the point that she said that, he walked down the hall because he could fill in the blanks.

And he did not go in. But the way they got through that, and this was the point of his illustration, was by recognizing, and one of the points that his wife made was, I can't stand this either. But this is the only way we can find out a way to help our son.

And if this is the only way, then I can take it. And so can you. And so can he.

And sure enough, they were able to go through and diagnose him and fix him up. And he's fine. He's the healthiest looking kid you've ever seen.

He's a teenager now. But it was a necessary, grievous, troublesome time. How did they get through it? They looked beyond it, to the goal and to the result, which was good.

That's what we have to do. That's what Daniel does here. How does he get through this? He remembers what the one standing by tells him.

The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom. That's what we have to remind ourselves of when we're tempted to be distracted, when we're tempted to be caught up in the moment, when we're grieved and troubled. Remember, the saints of the Most High, the sanctified ones, those who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, are the ones who prevail, are the ones who overcome, are the ones who please God and fulfill His purpose.

We have to remember that truth. It's a function of maturity. It's a function of being obedient and faithful.

It's a function of being faithful to God our Savior. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truths that You revealed to us from Your Word.

Thank You for the presence of the Holy Spirit to minister them to us, to remind us of them, to help us to see the truth of them and their application. We pray that in the days ahead we will grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and be thoroughly equipped for every good work in His name. We pray it in His name.

Amen.