

97-12-14a

This is Sunday, the 14th of December, 1997. And as we prepare to worship together in the study of God's Word, let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the many ways that you have expressed your grace toward us this past week.

We thank you that we have the freedom and the opportunity to assemble together as believers of like mind and fellowship together in the study of your Word and in reflection and meditation on it. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us. We pray that our conversation and our meditation on your Word this morning will be pleasing in your sight and will accomplish the purpose for which you have given us your Word and the Holy Spirit to build us up, to renew our minds and to enable us to be prepared for every good work.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. For our scripture reading this morning, if you'll turn with me to the book of Revelation, we want to look at chapter 21.

In Revelation 21, we have the description of the new heaven and the new earth. There has been differences of understanding and differences of interpretation about the sequence of events in the future. It has been helpful for us, and we have noted in the past, the distinction between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the Father.

There have been those who did not see that distinction and think that those are synonymous terms. But you will recall in our looking at the parable of the sheep and the goats and some of the other words of Jesus where he talks about the fact that the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father. Jesus spoke of the time when he would turn everything over to the Father at the conclusion of the millennial kingdom.

This is in my mind especially because I have been reading quite fervently this past week in Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion. John Calvin was a remarkable man and a very good and careful student of the word of God in many ways. Especially considering the time and the background of Catholicism that the early reformers were coming out of and having to respond to and justify themselves and their view of scripture and so forth.

It is remarkable the amount of truth that they were able to perceive and to teach. At the same time, just due to the necessary limitations of their circumstances and the shortness of life and so on, they didn't figure everything out. One of the unfortunate things, after so many good observations that Calvin made, he did not believe that the descriptions of Christ's millennial kingdom as being a thousand years were literal.

He thought it was blasphemy to say that the kingdom of Christ would ever come to an end. He thought that this just meant an indefinitely future period and that the kingdom of Christ was the eternal future. He did not distinguish anything beyond our entrance

into the next life.

But it is important to distinguish and you see it here in the Revelation to John. After the thousand years, which you see over in Revelation 20 verse 7, when the thousand years have expired, the thousand years of Christ's rule on earth, Satan is released, you have the Gog Magog rebellion, you have the resurrection of the unbelievers in verse 11 and 12 of Revelation 20, the great white throne judgment, and all of those who are going to the lake of fire go at this point. The unjust, the unjustified, in other words, unbelievers of every age are resurrected, they are judged according to their works, and of course there is nothing that man can do to earn a place standing before God justified.

And because their names are not found written in the book of life, they are cast into the lake of fire. Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire and this is the second death it tells us in 2014 of Revelation. After this, after the conclusion of the thousand years, after unbelievers are all, once and for all, placed with Satan, with the beast and the false prophet, all in the lake of fire, there is a new heaven and a new earth.

The first heaven and the first earth have passed away and there is no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people.

God himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.

There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. This verse has often been misapplied that as soon as we die we go to be with Jesus, so to speak, and there is no more pain, no more death, no more tears. Well, there will be death, there will be tears, and there will be pain during the millennial kingdom because there will be capital punishment, there will be death.

We've seen these passages in the Word of God in the past. But those things will all go away in the kingdom of the Father. Verse 5, Now, isn't it interesting that in the future, after the millennium has ended, after the great white throne judgment, after death and hell are cast into the lake of fire, the new heavens and the new earth are created.

There is no more pain, no more tears, no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying. There is still thirst. What kind of thirst do you suppose this is? Well, it doesn't take a great leap of understanding to realize that this is hunger and thirst after God, hunger and thirst after righteousness, hunger and thirst to know more of the infinite God who can never be fully known by a finite creature, which we will be even in the eternal future.

But the fountain of the water of life is given freely to him who thirsts. Now, there will be people who thirst and people who do not. Otherwise, this would be a meaningless

distinction.

If everyone thirsts, God would just say, I will give the water of life freely to everyone. He says to him who thirsts, he who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. The he who overcomes, the word there is famous in our culture today.

You can see it hundreds of thousands of places every day because it's the brand of shoe, Nike, N-I-K-E. The reason they chose that name is that Nike means victory or to be victorious. And to overcome here, this is from the word Nike in Greek and it means the one overcoming, the victorious one, the one who wins the victory shall inherit all things.

I will be his God and he shall be my son. Now, when is this being said? Is this in time? Is this in the millennial kingdom? This is after all things have been made new. Everybody who is still around to be spoken to by God is a believer, right? And yet God still makes a distinction.

There are those who thirst and those who do not. There are those who are labeled or who are identified as victors, overcomers, and obviously there must be those who are not. And he goes on in verse 8 to describe those.

The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part, meros, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. We've covered this before and this does not mean that these people are in the lake of fire. It would be sort of meaningless at this point having already resurrected them, judged them, and sent them to the lake of fire to go back and review that again in the context of verses 6 through 8. There is a contrast here in believers, in those who go forward with God into the eternal future.

He who overcomes shall inherit. This is the Greek word group from kleronomia or kleronomos, which is the word for inheriting. What is the contrast? Inheriting, being referred to as God's son, as an honor, a son in deed so to speak, a son who is the inheritor and the possessor of everything that belongs to the Father is at one end of the spectrum.

The other end are these who buy actions. Now, is there going to be abomination, unbelief, murder, sexual immorality, sorcery, idolatry, and lying in the eternal future? There is not. So when did these things take place? In time.

This is a legacy. This is what people showed up in the eternal future with. This is their identity in time that is still remembered and still carried forward.

Now, we have a hard time with this. We think, well, I thought the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin and so forth. That is true in the area of sin, but these things you will notice are all pattern of life identifiers.

This doesn't mean if someone ever committed fornication or if someone ever told a lie or if someone ever did something abominable. This is when someone can be described as this in this life, someone who is an idolater. Covetousness, for example, a pattern of fixation on material things through the years.

A pattern of fixation on self-gratification in the sexual arena or in the material arena. These are pattern of life. This is what we call evil versus sin.

If we as believers establish a lifestyle of apathy and rejection and indifference toward the things of God and the plan of God, one of these categories will apply to us because you are either serving God or you are serving your appetite. Jesus said you cannot serve both God and mammon. He was talking to believers.

Believers can serve the human appetite instead of serving God. It will fall under one of these categories. There are consequences of this that go forward through the millennial kingdom and into the eternal future.

We either show up there with the things that God is able to do in our soul, with the ability that we have to reflect the glory of God because of the decisions we have made in this life or not. There is just no getting around it. It would be nice to say that this life is forgotten and everybody has a wonderful, golden, equal future.

But that is not what the word of God teaches. Ignoring this has been detrimental to believers and detrimental to the church because we think, well, I may suffer the consequences in this life, but it won't really make any difference once the Lord returns or once I am resurrected why this will all be forgiven and forgotten. Well, it is forgiven, but it still has consequences.

We talked last week about the fact that our warfare is in the invisible realm. We achieve victory. We become possessors of Nike, possessors of victory, not by what we achieve in circumstances, but what we achieve in our soul.

We may always be in humble circumstances in this life. We may not be viewed as a success or viewed as particularly noteworthy from an external point of view, but people who are quietly going about living their lives in faith and winning victories day after day by maintaining the fruit of the Spirit under whatever circumstance comes our way achieve this Nike, this victory, this overcoming status. And that is what counts.

By the same token, people may achieve a lot in this life and be possessors of material things and satisfy appetites and desires in a lot of human areas and lack these things. That carries forward. There is an eternal weight of glory that is resting on the decisions that we make and the pattern of life that we establish now.

That's what Genesis chapter 2 and chapter 3 is all about. That's what we choose when we look at the options of good and evil. It wasn't the tree of the knowledge of good and

sin, was it? It's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Evil is different than sin. Sin refers to a single action, a single transgression. Evil is a pattern of transgression, a pattern of indifference, a pattern of rejection.

And if we as believers function in a pattern, function with an evil lifestyle, there are consequences that are unimaginably severe. This carries forward more than a thousand years into the future. It carries forward into the kingdom of the Father.

And there's just no way around it. It says it right here. Why is God talking about inheritance versus no inheritance? Why does he say, he who overcomes will inherit all things.

I will be his God. He shall be my son. The reason these things are recorded is not that these people are still cowardly or that they're still abominable or that they're still lying and murdering and so forth.

They're still sexually immoral. These things can only happen in time. These things are not going to be permitted in the millennial kingdom, are they? What people tend to do when they come to this passage is say, well, God is kind of going backward and saying, well, I'm getting such a mileage out of talking about the lake of fire and so forth.

I'm going to go back and review it here. And those who overcome are all believers. And these cowardly, abominable, sexually immoral, idolaters and so forth are all in the lake of fire.

The people are in the lake of fire. Well, what is the basis of going to the lake of fire? It's not being sexually immoral or being an idolater or a liar. Works are not the basis of going to the lake of fire.

It's rejection of Jesus Christ. That is the one and only issue. But people go back to verse 14 of chapter 20.

Actually, verse 13, they were judged each one according to his works. And people have come to this. I just read in some of my literature on the parables where people believe that there's degrees of punishment in hell based on these two passages, linking them together and saying this is referring to unbelievers who are judged according to their works.

And in verse 8, these especially abominable works for unbelievers, well, they're going to be in a more fiery spot in hell than people who are basically good and moral. There's no justification for this, and it's a terrible misunderstanding. We are just loath to believe that there's going to be anything but bliss for believers in the eternal future.

But it is manifestly what God is talking about, and it ties to our study in Genesis chapter

3. The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their mero, their portion. Now, this cannot be taken apart from verse 7, because these are two ends of the spectrum. The one who overcomes and achieves the victory, and this is the victory of living faith for believers, receive the inheritance, are sons indeed.

God is truly their God. They are truly God's son, not only in name, but in fact, in reality. The relationship is there.

Everybody knows that parents can have children, and sometimes they're close, and sometimes they have nothing to do with each other. You can be a son, you can be a son indeed. More than just birth, physical existence, physical relationship.

And that's what God is talking about here. And believers who in this life care nothing for God cannot expect to enjoy the standing and the blessing and the opportunity that believers who dedicate themselves to the pursuit of their relationship with God in this life are going to enjoy. There is a difference, and there is a reward for the faithful.

And there is a manifest lack of reward for those who are unfaithful. And those rewards are going to be detailed here in Revelation 21 and 22. If you flip forward now to Revelation 22, actually the end of chapter 21 describes the New Jerusalem.

It talks about all the gemstones that are made out of it in verse 22, or that it is made of. I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine in it, verse 23 of Revelation 21, for the glory of God illuminates it.

What is the New Jerusalem? The New Jerusalem is the residence of God. That's where the glory of God resides. We know that God is omnipresent.

We know that He is everywhere at the same time. And yet, in the same way that His glory filled the Holy of Holies, in the same way that His glory descended on Mount Sinai, the glory of God is going to reside in a special way, and in a visible manifest way, and in an accessible way, accessible to His creatures in the New Jerusalem. The nations of those who are saved, the nations of those who are delivered, shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

Notice, there are people who can come and go into the city. It's kind of like being a priest. In Israel, there were priests who were qualified, and who were sanctified by rituals, to enter into the holy place.

And the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies. He was a human being, the only one in Israel, qualified to go behind the veil. In this future state, there are going to be those who are qualified to enter into the city, who are qualified to go before the very manifest presence and glory of God in that city, and there are going to be others who are

not, just like it was in Israel.

Its gates shall not be shut at all by day, and there shall be no night there. They shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. Notice, even in the kingdom of the Father, there is going to be organization.

There are going to be nations, there are going to be kings. But there shall by no means enter into it anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. And we will come to what the Lamb's book of life is.

It has been misunderstood as being a roster of those who will be resurrected and live forever, and that's not the case. But look at chapter 22. He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the middle of its street and on either side of the river was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And you can see here that there is more than one tree of life.

This is a category of tree, a species of tree, if you will. You can't have one tree growing on both sides of a river, and you wouldn't talk about each tree if you're talking about a single one. This is a type of tree that lines the banks of the river of life.

You have the river of life, and these trees, in effect, draw that water up into themselves and bear fruit. And even their leaves, because those leaves have been created under the nourishment of the water of life, are valuable as medicine for healing. It's an interesting question to ponder.

What kind of healing will the nations need in the kingdom of the Father? And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. Notice that God the Father and Jesus Christ sitting at his right hand, on these twin thrones, if you will, are pictured as standing at the center of the city with the water of life flowing out from underneath. His servants shall serve him.

They shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. This is a subset of all of those who are alive and functioning in this future kingdom. His servants are able to come and see his face.

This is something that has never happened in history. No one can see God and live. Now they will be able to see God because of this qualification.

There shall be no night there. They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light, and they shall reign forever and ever. Look at chapter 22 and verse 10.

The angel who is communicating these things to John says in verse 10, Do not seal the

words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still. He who is filthy, let him be filthy still.

He who is righteous, let him be righteous still. He who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to everyone according to his work.

This is a reminder that we have a choice in this life of whether to be cowardly, whether to be covetous and idolatrous, whether to pursue our own appetites or pursue the things of God. It makes a difference. It has a huge effect on the future.

I am the Alpha Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city. This access is not based on, it doesn't say, Blessed are those who trust in me.

He could easily have said that, and it would make sense the way most people understand this. But there is more to it than faith. There is more to it than being resurrected to live in the eternal future.

Obedience is the qualification. Blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates of the city. Look at verse 15.

But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and whoever loves and practices a lie. Now, let me ask you something. Again, when people come to this verse, they say, Well, this is the lake of fire burning out here and it's going back to what we saw in the earlier chapter where based on these actions, these people are bobbing up and down in the lake of fire and they're right outside the gate of the city.

That's not the contrast that's set up here in verses 14 and 15, is it? Blessed are those who do his commandments. There's only two ways you can understand this verse and be consistent. Either the Calvinists are right and every believer perseveres.

People are given the gift of faith by God and people are given perseverance by God, which is what John Calvin believed. And if you are a believer, you are also obedient automatically because God pretty much forces you to be. He gives you that gift and causes you to be not only saved, but causes you to be obedient.

And this perseverance of the saints, every true believer is on an upward progress chart. If you charted your progress in spiritual life, if you are a believer, you will get better and better, more righteous and more righteous, more obedient, more holy, less sinful, less inclined. It's going to be an upward trend.

Either that is true or there is a distinction made between believers and the eternal future who make the choice in this life whether or not they are going to be obedient, whether or not they are going to abide in Christ, like he talks about in John 14. And if we fail, if we choose in free will to not be obedient, not keep his commands, we will fall under one of these categories. Dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, loving and practicing a lie.

The very same categories that we saw back here in chapter 21 verse 8. Now notice what he says. Where are we here? What's the environment in verse 14? You have the right to the tree of life and you have the gates of the city. But what tree and what city are we talking about? This is the new Jerusalem.

This is the kingdom of the Father. This is the new heavens and new earth. This is where God the Father and God the Son sit on the thrones and there's no night, there's no sea, there's no need for lamps or lights.

The glory shines forth from the city there. And those who do his commandments have the right to the tree of life. Well, is this do his commandments a synonym for every believer regardless of how they live this life? It doesn't really make sense.

Why doesn't he just say all those who have trusted in the Son, all of those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved. Why describe them as those who do his commandments? We know from observation that the bulk of believers don't do his commandments, don't have and keep them, just like Israel did not. And they were believers who had come out of Egypt under the blood.

Outside the city. It doesn't say toasting in the lake of fire are the dogs and the sexually immoral. And chapter 21, verse 8 doesn't say that they are in the lake of fire.

It says that's their inheritance. They are outside the city. Outside the city is not a synonym for in the lake of fire, is it? We've already seen that there are nations and kings who come and go through these gates.

Outside are dogs and sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, whoever loves and practices a lie. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches. Why does he testify these things that he's just mentioned? Because we're supposed to wake up and pay attention.

This makes a difference. This is our choice. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.

And let him who hears say, Come. And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely.

Now, if you'll turn back with me to Genesis chapter 3, it will become evident why we are concentrating on this tree of life passage at the end of the Bible, the last book of the

Bible. We go back to the first book of the Bible and the first references to the tree of life. We saw last week that the struggle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is spiritual, not physical.

It is in the realm of the soul. And it is in the area of our choice, our volition. And when God speaks in the garden and talks about the enmity between the two, there is a choice that is made.

When Adam and Eve were in the garden, the choice was whether or not to partake of the tree. Now, they are going to leave the garden. And their choice is still going to be life or death, obedience or disobedience.

But it's going to be set in a different context. It's going to be a different kind of choice. You will remember that when he says to Adam that the ground is cursed, in toil you shall eat of it, in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.

This is a new diet for man. He no longer can reach out and partake of the fruit of the trees of the garden. He's going to be expelled from the garden.

Now, when it's time to eat, he's got to partake of bread. In chapter 3, verse 20, Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And these two words, Chaya and Chaim, the word living and Eve are very similar in Hebrew.

Also for Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them. We've reviewed this in the past. We observe right away that there is death involved in covering the nakedness of the man and the woman.

These tunics are effectual in covering their sin. God provides a covering that is better. And the idea here is that the remedy for sin is going to involve death, going to involve the shedding of blood.

And this is something that God provides. God doesn't say, go kill an animal, skin it, and provide yourself clothing. God performs this sacrifice.

God slays the animal and God makes the clothing. Of course, he does this the first time. From then on, of course, they are going to follow this pattern.

But it's significant that the first time, God doesn't show them how or tell them to go do this. He does it for them. And that's significant because it's a picture of salvation.

It's a picture of God's remedy for sin, which is completely God's work. Adam and Eve have the option of refusing to put on the garments. But, of course, they accept them.

And this is non-meritorious faith in action. But now we come to verse 22. Then the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us, to no good and evil.

This resonates with the language of earlier verses in Genesis, doesn't it? This is the second time that God has spoken to himself or of himself in the plural. He first said, Let us make man in our image and after our likeness. And we talked at that time, is God speaking to angels and to higher created beings? Or is he, in fact, recording here a conversation more or less between the persons of the Trinity? And, of course, the latter is true because he wouldn't say to the angels, Let us make as though they had the power of creation.

But now the Lord God says, Behold, the man has become like one of us. This is what the serpent says to Eve in chapter 3, verse 5. God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. And God basically says, This has happened.

This is that twisted truth in the mouth of the serpent. It is true that they have become like God and they do now know good and evil. The difference is God's knowledge of evil is academic.

God does not perform evil. God does not create evil. God is not the author of evil.

God is not the cause of evil. But God, being who he is, is fully aware of evil. He knows all of its consequences.

He knows everything about it. But his knowledge of it is based on his divinity, on his deity, and on his omniscience. The knowledge that the man and the woman have is experiential knowledge.

They know it from having committed it. So there is a sense in which they are like God, knowing good and evil. But the means by which they have come to that knowledge is obviously at the opposite end of the spectrum from where God is.

But they have become aware of good and evil. And this is an irony. This is an ironic statement by God.

He echoes the words of the serpent, showing the deception that is involved in following the advice of the serpent. They have become like us to know good and evil. Now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.

What on earth is the difficulty here? God doesn't even finish the sentence. He says, lest this take place. And then we have what God does.

God answers or fills in the last half of this sentence with action. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. Then you see the quotation marks end, as they should.

Verse 23, therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground

from which he was taken. Well, the clue here, part of the solution to this puzzle, is right there in verse 23. It says the Lord God sent him, actually drove him out of the garden.

We find out in verse 24, he drove out the man. But he sends him out of the garden of Eden for what purpose? To till the ground. There are a lot of things that could have been said at this point.

He drives him out of the garden to live outside, to live with his wife, to live his futile days under the sun. But it says to till the ground. That reminds us of what God said back in verse 18.

The ground is going to bring forth thorns and thistles and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground. You're going to eat of the ground and toil.

So you have the contrast here in verse 22. He's going to put out his hand and take fruit from the tree of life. God drives him out to till the ground.

So that what he eats is the bread that he earns by the sweat of his brow. What conclusion do we draw from this? What does this all mean? It is not a matter of, well, if God left man with access to the garden of Eden, he could run in there and grab a fruit off the tree of life and he would never die physically. The diet is a picture of life in the spiritual realm.

When Adam and Eve are in the garden and they are unfallen, everything is provided to them by God. They simply reach out and partake of the fruit and they are satisfied. They are nourished.

They are refreshed. It is not that that fruit sustains their physical life and should the tree of life have been cut down or something, then they would have mortified and died. It is a reflection.

It is a symbolic indication that they have free access and that God totally provides everything for them. But now, because they have the knowledge of good and evil in an experiential sense, because they now must choose between good and evil, it is going to be a constant choice that is made day after day after day. They don't enjoy that presence of God.

They don't enjoy that unqualified access to God and the things of God. Now, to come to God is going to require a choice, an opposite choice. They were in an unfallen state and chose the evil.

Now they are going to live in an evil state, if you will. They are going to live in a fallen state and be required to choose the good. This is a strong evidence for free will.

Free will functions regardless of circumstance. You can't blame choice on circumstance. Adam and Eve were in a completely perfect environment, fully sustained by God and chose against Him.

Now they are going to live in a harsh environment where the ground is cursed and to subsist and to eat is going to require toil and the sweat of the brow. And they are going to have the choice of choosing God's deliverance, of choosing God's sustaining grace or not. Their volition functions freely in perfect environment and it functions freely in a fallen environment.

Their ability to please God has been inhibited, but their ability to choose God, their ability to choose for or against God, is just as free as it was in the garden. That chooser has no merit of its own. It's what you choose that counts.

So the Lord God sent him out to till the ground from which he was taken. God says, I don't want man reaching out and eating the fruit of the tree of life. He's not qualified for that anymore.

He's not qualified for unlimited divine provision, unlimited divine favor. Now he's going to have to live in the circumstances that are the consequence of his fall, consequences of the curse. It doesn't mean that God won't be glorified and it doesn't mean that they can't have relationship with God, but it's now on a different basis.

It is now qualified by choice. So he drove out the man and he placed cherubim at the east end of the Garden of Eden and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life, specifically to keep man from entering and partaking of the tree. We're going to pause here and take our break and when we come back we're going to take a look at this tree of life and find out why it is that this issue of access to the tree is so significant and what it tells us about our current status as we live outside the Garden of Eden.

Let's pause and take our break.