

15b REV

Let's pick up our study in Revelation chapter 12. We have seen the victory of the brethren who were accused before God day and night. The accuser himself has been cast down.

This is the dragon. We had a good question in the early part of the break about why is Satan pictured here and referred to as a dragon. This is the Greek word dracon, d-r-a-k-o-n.

And as Patty pointed out, Leviathan over in Job 41, if you look in the Greek Septuagint, this is the word, the Greek word that is used to translate the Hebrew Leviathan is dracon. And so the connection to this great uncontrollable denizen of the deep that requires hooks to be put in his jaws and so forth is there. This is the mythical creature Jason and the Golden Fleece.

The Golden Fleece was guarded by this dracon. It's the beast of several different kinds of mythology. And the red here is the fiery red coloring.

This is the Greek word puros. We get a funeral pyre or a pyrrhic victory. The idea of a fire, red flames and so on come from this.

And it's also the color of blood. There has been a bloody conflict. Satan's incursion into human history resulted in the fall.

It resulted in the first murder. You look at the times of Jehoram and you look at the times of Athaliah and the slaughter of the line of David, trying to wipe out the line of David so that Messiah could not come. And you have a little baby Joash being preserved out of that whole time following Ahab and Jezebel when there's just massive slaughter of the kingly line.

This is satanically inspired. The slaughter of the two year old and under infants by Herod. Same kind of thing.

It's the dragon crouching, trying to keep the woman from giving birth to this child. And that's Satan. The red reminds us of the bloody conflict that has been involved between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

And the fire, of course, is the idea of violence and the painful opposition that he has brought into the world. But it says that these overcame him, in verse 11 of chapter 12 of Revelation, by the blood of the lamb. Now, this is great.

You've got Satan, the dragon, the man of evil, the Beelzebub opposer and accuser from time immemorial coming after you. And you have something that can stop him. You can overcome him.

And it's the blood of the lamb. Well, how does this work? People say, the devil's after me. I feel, you know, that Satan's... You know, people try to bind Satan.

You have these people that have positive confession. And they say, well, they pray prayers and make incantations and imprecations and so on. They say, I'm binding Satan.

And they walk into a house and... Did you see the film of this woman that... I guess there's a TV show where people trade places. And they have women that go and swap places into each other's family. And they had some woman who... I didn't see the show, but I saw on some other shows that were startled at this woman's behavior.

Because I guess she was some kind of a charismatic Christian. And she came back and she decided that the family to which she had been sent was some kind of spawn of the devil or something. And she came back and she was binding Satan and casting out cameramen and saying all kinds of awful things.

And they gave her a \$50,000 check for her appearance. And she said it was, you know, satanic and blood money. She was ranting and raving.

She tried to tear it up, but it didn't tear. But then later on, she picked it up and cashed it. So it wasn't quite for real.

But that's not the way to oppose Satan. I mean, that's the way to help Satan. Sometimes our brethren in Christ are our worst enemies.

But how does the blood of Christ enable these brethren to overcome the dragon? If we understand this, it's going to help us. Because he is the energy behind the spirit of Antichrist that is at work in the world. He is the prince of the power of the air.

He does roam the earth seeking whom he may devour. And if our trials and tribulations are not disciplinary in nature, if it's not God spanking us and saying, get in line, then many times it is sort of the Job scenario, where God has allowed some part of the satanic agenda to touch us, to toughen us up, to strengthen us, and to prepare us for life both now and in the ages to come. So the key to success is understanding how does one overcome satanic opposition.

It says here, these brethren overcame him by the blood of the Lamb. What does the Bible say about the blood of the Lamb? We know the Lamb is Christ, so this is basically the topic of the blood of Christ. We know from Judas himself, who betrayed the Lord into the hands of men to be crucified.

Judas says in Matthew 27.4, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. The Lord Jesus is without spot. He is the Lamb without spot and without blemish.

He is the Passover Lamb that is qualified to serve as the redemptive atoning sacrifice. So

his blood represents purity, represents spotlessness. So this is why you have sort of the irony, or it's almost an oxymoron, that you have saints, we've seen them here in Revelation, who make their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

You say, wait a minute, you put white cloth in blood, it does not come out white. It comes out red and quickly brown. If you've ever gotten, used to be, you know, make yourself shaving, put on your dress shirt, go downtown, and you've got blood spots down there.

It's a nightmare trying to get them out. Once that dries, blood stains, very hard to get out. So how can you make something white in blood? Well, it's because the blood of Jesus Christ is unique, and it is a purifying agent.

It purifies, it is innocent blood. It is precious, it is valuable. Peter says this in 1 Peter 1.19, We have been redeemed not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Peter 1.19 It has great value, it is of inestimable value. It was a necessary sacrifice. Hebrews 9.22 Without shedding of blood there is no remission.

People, so many people today, when you talk to them, they think, Well, if there is a God, I don't think he's going to be sending me to hell, because I'm basically a good person. I don't cheat, I am honest, I function with integrity, I'm, you know, I'm kind of in the run of the mill of people, I'm basically a good American, I'm basically a good citizen, I'm not a liar, I'm not a cheat, I'm not a thief, I don't defraud. I'm a pretty good person.

As people go, I'm probably a little above average, and I just don't see the God of the universe frying me in hell for all eternity, when I'm a pretty good person. I just don't think I'm headed for the lake of fire. Without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Sin is the problem, and good works don't wipe out the penalty for sin. They don't. They can't.

God didn't tell the Israelites, Well, when you sin, go out and light 20 candles and say 5 Hail Marys, and everything will be great. The Catholics don't have this figured out either. They think good works will atone for sin.

Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. At salvation, it is redemption by the precious blood of Christ. As a believer, when we sin, where does forgiveness come from? 1 John 1.9, The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

When we acknowledge it. Don't acknowledge it, you're not cleansed. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Hebrews 9.23, This is the reason why it was necessary that the copies of things in the heavens, Hebrews 9.23, The copies of things in the heavens should be purified with

these blood sacrifices. But the heavenly things themselves were purified with better sacrifices than these. The heavenly temple, the heavenly altar, the heavenly ark, has been purified with the precious blood of Christ.

This, of course, is in typology and symbology. Jesus didn't go up like the Catholics say, carrying a bowl of His blood and say, Father, where is the temple? Let me splash this blood on it. It's heaven for crying out loud.

I don't know why the Catholics think that the host has to turn into literal flesh. They won't ever take any of that and put it under a microscope and see if there are cells in it. They won't put the wine under a microscope and see if it's turned into hemoglobin.

It's a spiritual transubstantiation, they say. Well, okay, then why are you trying to say it's transubstance? Transubstance means the substance is changing. Catholics believe that the bread and the wine turn into flesh and blood.

But if you try to prove it, they say, well, not really. But really. But not really.

But really. But not really. It's really until you turn the microscope on it, but then not really.

Well, the copies of things in the heavens were purified with better sacrifices than these. And they're not literal blood. It is the work of Jesus Christ.

It is the satisfaction of the justice of God that has purified the heavenly temple and the heavenly accoutrements thereof. The work of Jesus Christ, the blood of the Lamb, is sufficient. Hebrews 9, 13, and 14.

If the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctified from the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works? You don't use literal blood to cleanse a conscience. What are you going to splash it on? The blood of Christ cleanses the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Now, let me ask you this.

Let's say that you've got a human being. Well, let's say it's us. Let's just talk about ourselves.

We look at ourselves and we say, you know what? I've got a dead conscience. My conscience produces dead works. My intuition and my sense of right and wrong causes me to do things that are unproductive.

It causes me to do things that don't have any eternal impact. I am too much in this world. I am caught up with the moment.

I am caught up with the short term. I am caught up with the material. I am caught up

with gratification.

I am caught up with problem solving. That's the way I think. How can I think the thoughts of God? How can I bear the fruit that God wants me to bear? What agent on earth can change our mind? Is there a therapy? Is there a program? Is there a philosophy? Is there some sort of self-help type of thing? Is there something we can eat? Is there something we can drink? Is there something we can ingest? What is it that can fix our conscience so that we don't produce dead works anymore? Works of death.

Works that lead nowhere. Works that are unproductive. What fixes that? Hebrews 9.14 gives the answer.

The blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit, the Holy Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, will cleanse your conscience from dead works. How does the blood of Christ come into operation in our conscience? How is it applied? We don't have a bowl of it to splash. How do we lay hold of the power of the blood of Christ and apply it to our conscience? 1 John 1.9 If we acknowledge our sins, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

It is the word of God and the spirit of God in our soul that implement the power of God. And when I say the word of God, part of that is, what are the promises, principles, and doctrines? Everything you learn in the word of God will fit into one of those three categories. Anything you learn out of scripture is either a promise, which is something God has said he will do.

It is a principle, which means it is a divine truth that pertains to this life. Or it is a doctrine, which means it is a timeless truth. It is something that characterizes human relationship with God on a grander scale.

Principles are kind of like tactics. Doctrines are like strategy, if I can use that analogy. The blood of Christ will cleanse your conscience from dead works so that you can serve the living God.

It is the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, that cleanses us from all sin. And that work is complete and it is sufficient and it is final. Again, Hebrews 9. Right after 22 and 23, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.

You get into 9.24 and following. Christ has not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but Christ has entered into heaven itself. Now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Now to appear. He is up there now, representing us. We have an advocate before the Father.

Not that he should offer himself often, as the high priest went into the holy place every

year with the blood of another. He would then have to suffer often since the foundation of the world. But now, once, at the culmination of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

As it is appointed for men to die once after this judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for him, he will appear a second time, apart from sin, for deliverance. This is the blood of the Lamb.

The blood of Jesus Christ not only relieves us of the burden of sin. We don't have to worry about the guilt of sin. We don't have to be thinking about, you know, last week, last month, last year.

Sometime in the past, awful things took place. I sinned. Maybe I sinned egregiously.

Maybe I sinned dramatically. Maybe I sinned very imaginatively and creatively. I have sinned in spectacular ways.

We are cleansed. You know, it doesn't matter how much stain and grit and grime. I used to be amazed.

I don't know what they make football jerseys out of, but we didn't have a practice field. And so we practiced in a pasture when I played high school football. And it was the muckiest, mireiest, grimeiest, nastiest place.

And we would be out there in the rain and in the midst of it in the winter time. And going out there and, okay, now we're going to do tackling drills. Now we're going to do monkey drills.

We're going to do this, that, and the other. And I can show you photographic evidence. Yearbook staff came out and just laughed themselves sick taking pictures of us because we looked like some kind of a mud wrestling event.

Caked. Grass stained. Horrible.

Throw those white practice jerseys in the wash. And they came out looking like they were right off the shelf. I couldn't believe it.

I thought, that's impossible. But when you look at that jersey, there is no trace of all of the gunk that was on it when you put it in the washing machine. There's no record of it.

You look at the jersey and you can see nothing of all the sweat and blood and everything else that was on it the day before. That's how it is with the blood of Christ. If your robes are clean and white, why would you want to go back and say, Oh, yeah, but yesterday it was so muddy and yesterday it was so awful looking.

Hey, it's clean now. What are you worried about? Why agonize when it's gone? And who,

having gotten a great stain out of their clothes, every time they put that on say, Oh, but this used to be. I just can't go out in public because this used to be really dirty.

This used to be really stained. I just can't go out wearing this nice, bright, white, beautiful garment because it used to look terrible. I mean, it's really kind of nonsensical.

But that's what a lot of us do when we keep dragging up old sins and we keep looking at the past and saying, But I failed. I did this and that and the other wrong. And there's consequences and there's results.

No, there's not. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. There's no more powerful cleansing agent in the universe than the power of the blood of Christ.

If God says you're cleansed, you are cleansed. And you have no business going to God and saying, Do you want to stand there and tell Him that He didn't really cleanse it? You can't. It's complete.

It is sufficient. It is final. 1 John 1.7 If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

All you have to do is walk in the light. One of the quickest ways to step back into the darkness is to drag up old sins and say, Well, I'd really like to splash some more of that dirt on me and kind of start all over. Revelation 12.11, our passage.

We overcome the forces of darkness. We overcome Satan himself. We overcome the dragon by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

What do we do to walk in the light? We acknowledge our sins and claim the cleansing power of the blood of Christ and then we keep on walking in the light. Psalm 119.105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Psalm 119.11 Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

Thy word is a lamp. Thy word is a light. That's how we walk in the light.

It's the word of testimony. They're not saying, Oh, let me give you my testimony. I was a rotten, God-forsaken sinner and then I came crawling to Jesus and now I'm a great celebrity.

That's not that kind of a testimony. The word of testimony is THE testimony. Remember the exhortation in the Old Testament? To the law and to the testimony.

This is God's testimony. They did not love their lives unto death though he slay me yet will I trust him. The blood of Jesus Christ is the basis of fellowship, relationship, reconciliation to God.

Ephesians 2.13-16 Now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Many times we have felt far off, haven't we? Many times you get into a situation where there's a lot of darkness. There can be sin on our part.

There can be sin on the part of other people. It's ugly. It's the kind of thing where you just don't even want to wake up in the morning and be reminded of it.

There can be a lot of negative influence, a lot of pain, a lot of suffering. But the blood of Jesus Christ brings us near to God. And you can't stay in that state if you are near to God.

You who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself, this is Ephesians 2.14, talking about the Lord Jesus, he himself is our peace who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation having abolished in his flesh the enmity, the law of commandments, ordinances to create in himself one new man from the two thus making peace that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross thereby putting to death the enemyship. Jesus Christ is God and is man in one body.

And he has bridged the gap between the justice of God and fallen humanity. He has made the both one. We are united with Christ.

We are in him. He is in us. We can experience the indwelling of God, the indwelling of the Spirit, the indwelling of the Father, and the indwelling of the Son because of what Christ has done.

He himself is our peace. We have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Redemption is based on... Remember the three great things that happened at the cross? Redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation.

Reconciliation, blood of Christ, Ephesians 2.13-16. Redemption, Romans 3.24-25. Everybody remembers Romans 3.23? All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But what about 24 and 25? Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God set forth as... What's the third great thing? Redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation. Romans 3.25 God set him forth as a propitiation by his blood.

What's the difference in those three things? It's the direction of it, isn't it? Reconciliation, that's man. Man has been reconciled to God. Propitiation is toward God.

God's justice is satisfied. Redemption, the payment for the penalty of sin has been paid. We have been redeemed.

That price is paid. The penalty for sin is gone. Redemption, reconciliation, propitiation.

Romans 3.24-25 God set him forth as a propitiation by his blood through faith to demonstrate his righteousness because in his forbearance God had passed over sins that were previously committed. That's a topic unto itself. We are declared righteous.

Not only is our sin deficit eliminated and the soiling and the depravity and the corruption of sin cleansed away from us but that's sort of like going into the red. It's like going into the hole. We have a negative situation because of sin.

All of that is taken care of and we're brought up to zero. The whole sin thing is wiped out and we're at zero. Then we go to positive righteousness also through the blood of Christ.

This is Romans 5.9 Much more than having now been justified by his blood we shall be delivered from wrath through him. Justified means declared righteous. There's a difference in being not sinful.

A tree stump is not sinful but it's not righteous. It's just not sinful. We are not sinful anymore through redemption, through propitiation and now we are declared righteous.

We have in him our righteousness. He has given to us, the Lord Jesus Christ has assigned to us and credited to us his righteousness. It's like, and the Bible uses this analogy, it's sort of like when someone dies and leaves you a bequest.

Christ died, but of course he didn't stay dead very long but through his death he has given us a bequest of his righteousness. And it goes to all those who through faith are delivered from wrath in him. We are sanctified.

Hebrews 10.29 Those who have been sanctified by the blood of the covenant and then trample the Son of God underfoot and insult the Spirit of Grace are in trouble. Hebrews 10.29 We've looked at that many times. There is eternal life in the blood of Christ.

When we talk about eternal life we understand what the scripture means. This is not so much duration as it is quality. Everybody wants quality of life, don't they? That's why everybody is trying to make money.

That's why everybody wants a better environment. That's why everybody wants to know war, visualize world peace. That's why everybody wants the troops home and poverty to be solved and a cure for the common cold and everything else.

We want a great environment. Life in terms of quality doesn't get any better than life that partakes of the eternal, life that partakes of that which characterizes God himself. Eternal life is eternal in the sense of beyond this life, beyond the corruption and the depravity of this life.

Eternal life is ours through the blood of Christ. John 6.53 Jesus said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,

you have no life in you. And of course, this is a gruesome thought.

A lot of people quit following Jesus when he made this statement because they misunderstood it. They were the earliest Catholics and they thought it was real flesh and real blood and they got grossed out and they left. Seriously.

Seriously. That's why many of them said, eat it? Cannibalism? No way. I'm leaving.

This guy's gone weird. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood. He starts out in John 6 and he's going to finish up in the upper room with this same symbolism, isn't he? This bread is my body which is broken for you.

This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Eat this bread. Drink this cup.

He said it way back in John 6 at the beginning of his ministry and he finished up with the disciples in the upper room saying the very same thing. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. As the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on me will live because of me. What's he talking about? It has nothing to do with his actual flesh and blood.

How did John begin his gospel? In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and what happened to the Word? The Word became flesh. The Word became flesh. All you have to do, the Bible interprets itself.

You just look at the context and there it is. Eat my flesh. What is his flesh? It's the eternal Word of God.

Partake of the Word. That's how you partake of eternal life. Make it your nourishment.

Make it the source of your energy and your strength. That's what happens to food that we eat. That's what powers us.

That's what gets us through the day is the food that we eat. Make the Word of God your sustenance. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

But it's not just the flesh. It's also the blood. Partake of the blood.

What is the blood? What did Jesus say about the cup? This cup is the promise of God, the covenant of God, the hope of the future. I will drink this cup with you new in the kingdom. Trust the promises of God.

I love that song that I learned as a child in the CEF Child Evangelism Fellowship. Faith is

just believing. What God says He will do, He will never fail you.

His promises are true. If we but receive Him, His children we become. Faith is just believing.

And that's all we have to do. If God makes a promise, take it to the bank. Make Him fulfill it.

Remind Him of it. Pray about it. Lord, You have said, so I'm sitting here and I'm confidently expecting that You're going to fulfill this promise.

You have said that I can lay me down in peace and sleep because You make me to dwell in safety. You have said that You will hear from heaven the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. You have said that You will provide for my needs according to Your riches and glory, that You own the cattle on a thousand hills.

Take it to the bank. Make that the food that powers you through the day. You know, a lot of times people say, well, you get out of something what you put into it.

If you try to learn a musical instrument or you try to learn a foreign language, but you're just kind of inconsistent and slapdash and half-baked and spit and sputter along, well, you know, if you try to do that with Spanish, you're never going to learn Spanish. If you practice the piano twice a month, you're never going to learn the piano. And if we do not daily make God's Word the food for our soul, we're never going to see the power of God come into our lives.

It has to be a consistent diet. So, we have seen now on the blood of the Lamb by which these brethren overcome the devil, overcome the most powerful creature that ever left the creative hand of God, how do you overcome Him? The blood of the Lamb, which is pure, precious, necessary, sufficient, final, cleansing, conquering, it is the basis of our reconciliation, it's the basis of our redemption, it's the basis of our propitiation, it's the basis of our justification, the basis of our sanctification, the basis of our fellowship and communion with God, it is the basis of our victory, and it is the substance and source of our eternal life. That's what we've covered in the last 15 minutes.

The blood of the Lamb. You and I cannot live as believers apart from those truths. Well, that's how the brethren overcome the dragon.

The blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. One of the great things that we have as believers is we no longer fear death. Now, I don't look forward to checking out, but it's mainly selfish.

I want to be here and try to learn as much as I can before I go. And this is such a great opportunity, and it's never going to come again. We're never going to come back here and live this life.

We're never going to fight against sin. We're never going to battle against the prince of the power of the air. We're never going to try to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

For the rest of eternity, we'll be like the angels. We'll be in a great environment. This is our only chance.

It's kind of like being a Marine to me, or being in the armed services for somebody else, where you read about wars, and you read about battle, and you read about how I was in the artillery, and you learn how to shoot missions, and how to put steel on a target, and how to adjust fire, and how to account for all of these different factors to make sure things go where you want them to go. Rounds impact where they're supposed to impact. But if you never see a shot fired in anger, if you never get to actually put all of this to use in the context for which you were trained, you always feel like you kind of missed something.

Well, I was always ready, but I never had to use it. You can go take a class in CPR, but if you go your whole life and you never get to pound on somebody's chest and blow the life back into them, you think, well, I was ready, but wouldn't it be great if I'd actually got to do that one time? Right? Well, this is our time. This is our time to put these things into practice.

We will never again have this chance. We are on the ground with the heart attack patient. This is our chance to do our CPR.

We are in a conflict. This is our chance to fire live rounds and do damage to the enemy. This is it.

We're in it. And if we can remember that, then we are going to avail ourselves of the blood of Christ, we're going to avail ourselves of the word of the testimony, and we're not going to be worried about our own lives. The course of this life is so brief.

You know, how it is when you have to do CPR and you've got to pinch the airway shut and put your mouth on somebody's mouth and blow. This isn't something we normally fantasize about and look forward to and say, boy, I can hardly wait to get some, you know, 85-year-old person that's on the ground with a heart attack and pinch their nose shut and blow into their mouth. I mean, it's just not something you think is going to be a good thing.

Right? But at the moment where it's necessary, you don't think about your qualms, you don't think about the aesthetics of it, you don't think about anything other than here is my chance to save a life. Here's my chance to put my training into practice. You don't think about yourself.

You don't think about how it looks. You don't think about how it sounds. You don't think

about how it feels.

All you do is apply what you know in the interest of a higher and greater objective. And that's what we're supposed to be doing here. Who cares in a few brief years if we achieve this, that, or the other? All of that is waiting for us as a part of our heavenly citizenship.

We have a great place to live. We have a great environment. We have great peace.

We have great prosperity. We have great riches. We have great privileges.

We have great opportunities. Eye has not seen. Ear has not heard.

It has not entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him. Anything by way of gratification is there. It's waiting.

What's not there and waiting is the chance to make a difference. The chance to reflect the glory of God. The chance to implement the power of God.

That's what these people understand. They do not love their lives, even unto death. It doesn't matter what you do to these people.

They're going to feed on the word of God. They're going to live by the power of his testimony and save the good stuff for later. Do not love their lives unto death.

That's how you win the battle against Satan. Satan will take your love for life and turn it against you. Satan will take your love for people and turn it against you.

Satan will take your love for anything that you love more than God and turn the sharp end of it or the butt end of it right into your guts and spill you on the road like Asahel. That's what Satan does. He turns our own strengths against us.

That's what any good combatant does. You find the strength of your opponent and turn it against him. And if you have a strong love for something, Satan will use it.

You can't love your life. You have to be willing to lose it. He who loves his life, Jesus said, will lose it.

He who loses his life for my sake will find it. And it's in the very act of giving those things up that we lay hold of them. We give them up temporarily and we lay hold of them eternally.

That's what these people understand. That's the nature of this victory. It's a big, big deal.

It's a major point. That's why it is in this section before we start the bowl of judgments. It's in this interlude period.

And these people are spotlighted. They're highlighted. Nobody has beaten the dragon until this chapter.

He's not been defeated in any of the previous 11 chapters of Revelation. Nobody said, oh, well, look, the dragon, there he is flopping on the ground. Somebody stuck a spear in his neck.

Hasn't happened. Who defeats him? There is war that breaks out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with him.

And the dragon and his angels did not prevail and there's no place for them in heaven. They get kicked out of heaven and they come down to earth. But he's not exterminated.

He's not extinguished. He's not gone. He's just been pushed out.

He's been pushed off the high ground. But he's still there. Who overcomes him on earth? These people.

Therefore rejoice, the voice says in verse 12. Rejoice, oh heavens, and you who dwell in them, and woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea. Who are the inhabitants of heaven at this point that can rejoice? That would be us.

Satan will still have access to heaven. We're going to get to see the most glorious thing that ever came off the creative hand of God when we go with the Lord Jesus up into the heavenly realms. We'll get to see him.

He's still roaming around up there. But he's going to be cast down and we're all going to say, Hooray and good riddance. Rejoice, oh heavens, and you who dwell in them.

He is gone. We don't have to look at him. We don't have to listen to him.

He's not accusing the brethren up here anymore. But I sure feel sorry for the people down there where he went. Because he knows his time is short and he is going to make a big, ugly scene.

And that's what's coming up in verse 13 and following. The dragon sees that he's cast to the earth, persecutes the woman who gave birth to the child. These are the people living in the hills.

He's going to try to suck them out of there. He's going to try to deceive them. He's going to do the very same thing that he's done from the beginning.

But the woman is given these great eagle's wings. The serpent spews water out of his mouth. We saw this last time.

The earth helps the woman. The earth opens its mouth and swallows up the flood which

the dragon spews. The dragon is enraged with the woman and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

And these are those remaining 144,000 witnesses who are on the earth. 144,000 servants of God. Well, this brings us to chapter 13 and the beast from the sea.

And we're going to see next time that because Satan can no longer manifest himself in heaven, he's going to manifest himself on earth. And this beast that rises up out of the sea looks suspiciously like the dragon. Same number of heads.

Same number of horns. Same source of power. And the beast is in fact the Antichrist, the spirit of Antichrist that is even now at work is going to find a body.

It's not the body of Moses, but it's a body. And there is an individual possibly even alive on the earth at this moment who is going to be the Antichrist. Interesting things happening over in the Middle East even as we speak.

But at some point there's going to be a world leader emerge. Satan's going to indwell him and all of these events of chapter 13 are going to take place in and through him. So that's what we'll pick up next time.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the clear picture that is presented to us from your word. Our opportunities, our resources, the power that is ours through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these on our hearts and may he find us teachable and impressionable so that we will think on these things and make them a source of application in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.