

# the dragon and the woman

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[0:00] Thank you very much. Yeah, it doesn't prove a lot, but it's just the way it's written.! There are certain things that are repeated.

So, sign was in 12.1, the sign of the woman. And in 12.3, another sign. So, this is an interesting new thing.

Signs. I don't think we've had signs before. And great. So, you found great in 12.1, a great sign. And then that word great, it's in the original, it's mega.

Is in verse 3, an enormous red dragon. They could just as well print, I'll say that, a great red dragon. And there's some more greats somewhere.

Verse 9, the great dragon was hurled down. And in verse 10, the voice was a great voice, a mega voice.

[1:00] And in verse 12, he is filled with fury. It actually says he has mega fury. So, there's great fury there. So, there's quite a few big things going on.

And the... I think those were the ones I said, wasn't it? Sign? Place. Yeah, where did you find place? Well, no, I was looking for the exact word place.

Verse 6. The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her. Yeah, and then? Verse 8. Satan and his angels lost their place in heaven. And I think there's another place, isn't there? Verse 14.

She might fly to the place prepared for her. So there's something about places as regards the woman and places regards the adversary. And then the hurling.

[2:12] So there's a lot of hurling going on. It's to chuck. To chuck out. It's there in verse 4.

The dragon chucks the stars down to the earth. What was the next one? Verse 9.

It's translated as hurled. But it's the same word. So Satan is chucked out of heaven. And that's repeated in verse 9 again, isn't it? He was chucked to the earth.

And in verse 10, he has been chucked out. And verse 13, he has been chucked out. So the writer wants us to be in no doubt that Satan was chucked out.

He has been hurled and cast out, flung to the earth. And then the same word is used in verse 15. The snake chucks out water, spews out water like a river.

[3:17] And in verse 16, the dragon spewed out of his mouth. So there's a lot of chucking going on. It's quite a violent chapter with things being chucked about all over the place. Okay.

Well, let's pray again. Please help us, Lord, as we get into this chapter. And as we get into this book again, to hear what you are saying to us. Amen. And what I'd like to say is, I think some of the things that we look at might remind you of hymns or songs.

And if you have got an appropriate hymn or song, and we get to a point, I will say, anybody got any suggestions? And if we can, we'll sing it, because it might spark off things in your mind.

Okay. The book of Revelation, so far, it's a book in the Bible. It is for our edification. It is for our survival. And for our progress as Christians.

Apocalypse. Apocalypsis means to take away the veil. So that you can see the reality behind the appearance. And I was listening to a podcast on this.

[4:26] And the writer said something like this. Lord, help us to see the reality behind the appearance. And understand our real enemies. I think that's a good prayer.

I hope I got the wording pretty much right. Help us to see the reality behind the surface appearance. And understand our real enemies.

My wife's saying I'm not speaking loud enough. Can you hear me? Yeah. I should tell her to sit at the front, really, shouldn't I? It is the sort of book it is.

It starts off very much like a letter. And the idea of a letter is that it's relevant to the people receiving it. So as we read it, we should think, how does this mean something to the people who heard it in the first place?

It would be a very strange letter. I mean, it's not impossible. It would be a very strange letter if you write to somebody and you tell them about something not to do with them at all. So I think the fact it's a letter means it must mean something to the people who originally heard it.

[5:38] And for those of you who were here through the earlier times, it is written to a certain number of churches. And the answer is seven. He loves numbers and symbolic numbers.

Seven seems to be the number, which means the complete totality of something. So he's writing to seven churches. He's really saying, I'm writing to every church, to all the churches.

They fit in here somewhere. There's something for you, whatever church you belong to. It is also in the form of a prophecy. It says it's a prophecy. So it's not just a letter, but it's not.

It is at least a letter. It's in the form of a prophecy. So prophecies do look forward. He says he's telling them what's shortly going to happen. He's warning them about things.

And one of the things he's warning them is that persecution is going to come to the church. At the time of writing, their opposition had come mostly from the court of Jewish people.

[6:36] But it's now going to tilt and pivot into opposition coming from the Roman Empire. So he's telling them what's shortly going to happen. And prophecies give you behavioral implications of the big picture.

So we're marching to Zion. And if we're marching to Zion, let our songs abound and every tear be dry. That's a sort of now implication of a future destination and the travel that we're on.

So that just brings us up to speed on that. And then I'll do some pictures of all the things in the book of Revelation. Anybody like to shout out just one or two?

Pardon? Throne. Throne. Throne, yes. I thought I said drone. Yeah, throne, yes.

Excuse me. Sorry. Lamb. The lamb, yes. And the lamb represents? Jesus. Yes, Jesus Christ. Yes. Dragon. There's a dragon.

[7:39] Bride. There's a bride. Rider. Rider. There's a rider, yes. There are four horsemen of the apocalypse. That's those there. Babylon. Babylon, yes.

That's the city which is set up in opposition to God. And therefore there's another city as well. Zion. Zion. Yes, it's called Zion. The city meaning to say the home of God's people.

And there's various other things on there. But we don't want to stop too long on that. So previously the seven churches had been addressed with current issues, calls to repent, future warnings and future promises.

We saw the scene in heaven. The lamb on the throne opens the scroll of world history. We saw seven seals. And as the seals are open, we see plagues and troubles on what we would nowadays call the ecosystem.

So the different things like the sky, the earth, fresh water and salt water. Those four aspects of the ecosystem. And those troubles are leading to final judgment.

[8:46] And in the first sequence with the seven seals, the church of Jesus Christ, both Old Testament and New Testament, inhabitants.

That's not the right word, is it? But they're secure. And then we had seven trumpets. Again, plagues on the ecosystem. And then we got the idea of satanic involvement in disorder in society.

Mentally, people to repent. In this situation, the church gives God-enabled witness. And some people do turn to the Lord.

Now, where are we going into chapter 12? What new thing is there? Now, we have been warned to overcome. So each of the churches, it was told, to those who overcome.

But I'm not sure that it was entirely clear who or what they were to fight with. What is the opponent?

So in this gospel age, as we move from the Old Testament, where God is mostly concerned about Israel, as we go into this explosive fulfillment of all the prophecies and all the promises, what will it

be like?

[10:02] Will it be sort of ease and comfort, just as Christ effortlessly brings the Gentiles into his kingdom? Or what?

And incidentally, the answer is no. The Christian life is not a life of unhindered ease and comfort and fun. I mean, that might be a young person's view of the Christian life, but it doesn't work because that isn't what the Christian life is like.

It's a prosperity view. It's a prosperity view, yes. It's almost like, if I dare say, a Christian union view, that we get together and have lots of fun and do quizzes and have socials.

That doesn't really prepare you for the Christian life, in my view. What is the nature of the gospel age? What are the main factors that we are to look out for?

And what should be the stance of gospel churches and gospel Christians? So those are the sort of questions that we're coming up against as we come into chapter 12. Now, in chapter 12, there are three main characters.

[11:12] Hold on. So the first one is... Don't interpret it. Just tell us what it says. First of all, dragon. Yeah.

And? Pregnant woman. Woman. Pregnant woman. Yeah. And? Baby. Baby. Child. What gender? Male. Yes.

Okay. Right. So these are the three main characters. So first off, let's try and identify from the text who these characters are. So let's start off with the child.

What can you see? Just have a look. Why don't you have a quick talk to your neighbor for one minute. What data are we given about this child?

So one minute to either think to yourself or talk to your next door neighbor. We know the child is male. What else do we know?

[12:12] Thank you.

We're starting with verse 10. Okay, let's go with what we've got.

The child. And one thing, this is an obvious thing, but needs to be said, is he uses symbolism, and a lot of his symbolism is drawn from the Bible, from the Old Testament part of the Bible.

And there's lots of references and quotes from the Old Testament part of the Bible. And if we knew our Bibles very well, we'd probably pick up lots of echoes as we go through.

But that's where we should be looking to get our data. Okay, so I've lost my place now.

[13:50] What could anybody like to put up their hand and tell us something about the child? What have you got, Richard? The child was snatched up. Snatched up.

Okay. You know, I think you said two things there.

Did you say snatched up? Okay, the snatched up. That is one of the very few words, sorry, the very few occasions where the word *arpazo* is used, from which people get the English word rapture.

Rapture doesn't usually mean snatched. Rapture usually means you're very happy about something. But some Christians would put, this would be an important word for them.

Then this is one of the places, one of the few places where it's used to mean snatched, taken, *arpazo*. He's snatched up.

[15:04] And where is this person snatched up to? God and his throne.

Okay, now that's an important piece of information, isn't it?

So this child sits on the throne. I probably haven't got things in the same order. So let's hold that thought. Has anybody else been taken to God's throne in the book of Revelation?

Well, in the book that we've already done. You're right about Elijah, that he was snatched up. Yes, it was like that. Yes. Daniel had a vision of the throne.

Daniel had a vision of the throne. Yeah. I was thinking of anybody who finds himself placed on the throne. That's what I should do. The lamb. The lamb. Yeah. The lamb is upon the throne in chapter 4.

That's right, isn't it? Yeah. Because first of all, there's the God, the Father is worshipped. And then we find the lamb in the midst of the throne is worshipped. So we're sort of getting a clue there.

[16:08] Anything else? So what was the other thing that Richard said? The iron scepter. Really with an iron scepter. Where does that come from? Psalm 2. Psalm 2.

Please, if you know your Bible and can do this without getting into a terrible muddle, could you turn to Psalm 2? Psalm 2. Psalm 2.

Could, um, Mark, could you, um, pass the... Somebody on the back row like to read for us? Psalm 2.

Could you read us verses 7 to 9, please? Psalm 2. I will declare the decree the Lord has said to me. You are my son.

Today I have begotten you. Ask of me when I will give you the nations of your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron.

[17:28] You shall dash them to pieces like a pot of sceptor. Thank you very much indeed. So, just thinking of the psalm, who is the psalm talking about or talking to?

Because it says you. You will break them in pieces like with a rod of iron. So, who is the psalm talking to? The anointed king. The anointed king. Anointed is the same as Messiah. So, the Messiah, the king.

He's also called something else. He's also called the son. Yes, all those titles come together. Messiah, king, son.

And the particular thing here is if the son asks the father for the nations as his inheritance, that will be given to him and he will rule them with power.

You will break them like a rod of iron and dash them to pieces like pottery. So, there's a strength to that rule. And if we were to read on, there's also an invitation to make friends with the king before he has to get tough with the nations.

[18:37] Kiss the son or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction. So, there's a sort of gospel presentation of Messiah. And the child fits that description.

Is that right? So, if we go into Revelation 12, that's Psalm 2 is the reference to that. Anything else that we can say about this child?

That the dragon wanted to devour it. Thank you very much. The child wanted, sorry, the dragon wanted to devour the child. Just hold that thought for one moment while I ask the previous question, which is where does the child come from?

The woman. The woman, yeah. So, he's born of the woman. As it says in Galatians, born of woman, born under the law. And he immediately on being born, Satan wants to get rid of him.

I've given away part of that, haven't I? Can anybody think in the gospels of something that seems to fulfill that idea of the child?

[19:50] King Herod. Yeah. King Herod trying to destroy the babies as soon as they've been born. And that's part of the opening of Matthew's gospel, I think.

Okay. So, let's see. Born of woman. Rules the nations with the rod of iron. Snatched or raptured to the throne of God. Who is it? So, what have we done? We actually said, who is this? Christ. Christ Jesus.

Yes, that's right. It's Jesus. So, we've identified the child. So, this is not too difficult. This one, the dragon. The dragon with, excuse me, seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. Please just have a quick word with your neighbour and what can we find out from the text about the dragon. There's actually quite a few things that we can say about the dragon. Let's go.

Thank you.

[22:01] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Okay, shall we see what we've got about the dragon?

On Duolingo, I'm learning German. And Roger can tell me whether I've got this right. The German word for a kite...

I think it's dracon, actually. I don't know whether that is the word for it. Is that right? Yeah, dracon is German for a dragon.

What's a kite that you fly in the air? A kite in the form of a dragon. Maybe. Anyway, that's completely irrelevant, isn't it? So, dragon. What have you found out?

[23:32] Anybody put up their hand and tell us what they found out? Quite a few things. Steve? It tells us who he is. Yep. It's Satan. Yep, it's Satan. Verse 9.

Satan. In my understanding, Satan means adversary. Saddam Hussein used to refer to America, USA, as the great Satan.

The great adversary. Okay. Satan. Yeah. What else do we know about this dragon? It's also called the ancient snake, as you'd be referring to the snake in Genesis.

Thank you very much. He's also referred to the ancient snake. Which verse is that? It's the same verse. Same verse. Verse 9. Yep. Thank you very much. Which takes us back to the Garden of Eden, doesn't it? The snake in the Garden of Eden.

Yep. Anything else? He leads the whole world astray. Thank you very much. He leads the whole world astray. I looked it up. It's the word for deceive. He deceives.

[24:39] Okay, let's just do deceive. So, the great deceit. I think C.S. Lewis would have said he deceives people either to think he doesn't exist, or to have funny comical ideas about who Satan is.

Of course, Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers so they can't see the glory of the gospel in the face of Jesus Christ. So, he's a deceiver. He covers the whole world with deceit, with unbelief and blindness.

And Pete? Who said? Yeah. He's an accuser of his brother. Which verse is that? The accuser of the church. Yeah. That seems a very crucial thing, doesn't he?

The accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night. So, we'll come back to that. He's the accuser. He did. He did.

He did. With half-truths and straightforward lies. Yes. Yeah. Doesn't Jesus say, your father, your children of your father, the devil, he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

[25:46] Doesn't Jesus say something like that in John's gospel? He has angels. He has angels who assist him. Yes.

Which verse is that, please? Seven. Seven. Yes. The dragon and his angels. Yes. Anything else? He was told to ask that he's angels.

Yes. He gets kicked out. We'll come to that in a moment. That's quite a lot. Let's see. He has destructive power. He has angels attending. He's the snake.

He's the devil. He's Satan, the adversary. He's the deceiver. He's the accuser. He accuses believers night and day. And of course, one of the first things Christians learn is that we have an opponent and an adversary.

And you don't get very far in the Christian life without realizing that. And Paul says in one of his letters, I didn't look it up, we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. We have a tricky, unprincipled, ruthless opponent.

[26:51] And by God's grace, we don't always taste his horrible power. But sometimes we do. And we're to be aware of that. There's a book by the Puritan.

Which Puritan was it who wrote Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices? Have we come across this? Brooks. Brooks, was it? Yeah. And in John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, he gives various sort of ideas of what Satan does and how he scares people and frightens people and so on. Anyway, okay. We find that person. We'll come back to that. Just to repeat the picture. It says he's strong, but he's not strong enough. Correct.

Yes. He's strong, but he's not strong enough. It says he was not strong enough. Now, where does it say that? He was not strong enough. Yeah, thank you very much.

That's really helpful. Okay, let's come to the third character then, which is the woman. Now then, have a look at what you think about this woman.

[28:02] Because there are different ideas as to who the woman is, which is why I left her till last. Well, there are some of those. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Okay, let's see what we've come up with.

There are various ideas that will come to mind, but you can go through them and think, does this fit everything that's said about this woman?

So, anybody like to kick us off? Well, logically, you think it's Mary. Okay, you might think it's Mary. And I guess if you were in a Catholic situation, your thoughts would very much go towards Mary.

[29:48] Is this Mary? Now, let's have a little look at what we see. Let's do the stars and the moon and the...

What have we got? Clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, a crown of 12 stars on her head. So, if you went into a Roman Catholic cathedral, you might well see a Mary depicted that would pretty like this, you know, the Queen of Heaven.

So, let's just work out where this idea comes from. Would you like to find Genesis chapter 37, verse 9? So, this is Joseph's dream.

Joseph in the Old Testament, he has a dream. And who's got the microphone at the moment? Anybody around there like to ask?

Could you read us Genesis 37? If you could read from verse 5 to verse 11, please. Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

[31:15] He said to them, Listen to this dream I had. We were binding sheaves of corn out of the field, when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered round mine and bowed down to it.

His brothers said to him, Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us? And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said?

Listen, he said, I had another dream, and this time the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me. Keep going.

When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father refused him and said, What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?

His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind. Thank you. Now in that bit, there is sun and moon and eleven stars, not twelve, but eleven.

[32:26] What, immediately they are identified as something. Who or what are they identified as? Father and brothers. Yeah, Joseph's mother and father and brothers. So they're people.

And that just seems the immediate interpretation. So if we have that in mind, there's something here which at least suggests to us people.

Okay, let's go a bit further. She gives birth to the Messiah. I think we've established that, haven't we? Verse five, she gives birth to a son, a male child.

So who does that put us in mind of? Jesus. Well, Jesus is the child, but Mary. Okay, so we're still thinking about Mary.

She gives birth to the Messiah. Now they also put, she's like Eve, the Old Testament mother who gives birth. And it's also like Israel, who sort of nationally speaking and historically speaking, gives birth to the Messiah.

[33:41] And there's some references which I haven't put down in Isaiah's prophecy of the nation laboring, being in labor in the sort of pregnant sense to try and give birth to the Messiah.

So that's another sort of echo. I think one thing that tells us, I think we're thinking this is a bit like Eve.

It's certainly like Israel. It's certainly like Mary. Mary. But she's, she, if you go into verse 13, she's given the two wings of a great eagle.

So do you think that can be Mary? Hmm. It's interesting, isn't it? And then she has a lot more children. So I'm not sure whether we're going beyond Mary.

And the, the, pardon? She does, but I'm just thinking of the quantity of children. Verse 17, the dragon was enraged that the woman went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.

[34:57] So he seems to be describing all believers there, doesn't he? So this woman is sort of the, the birth source of all believers down through history and on into the New Testament times.

So I would say that this is a representation of the people of God. Of the people of God in the Old Testament. I mean, that includes Mary and includes Eve and includes Israel.

And then going on to the people of God in the New Testament. If you wanted to put it in technical words, you'd say the messianic community. Or probably better just say the people of God.

Here is the people of God, Old Testament, from whom Messiah comes. And these are Messiah's people on into the New Testament who are persecuted by the evil one.

Does that make sense? Yes. So, there's just one thing you said. Yes. You said that Mary is in the Old Testament. No, I think what I was trying to say was, there's a likeness.

[36:05] Mary fits in a way. I mean, she is one of the people of God. But the Israel is the mother of Messiah, in a way.

And Israel is in... Have I got... No, I haven't. If you look at Galatians 4, verse 6, we have a mother. And it isn't Mary.

When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary doesn't come to me. Speaking words of wisdom, let it be. I think that's the wrong reference, isn't it?

I think I meant Galatians 4, verse 26. The Jerusalem that is above, the city being the people of God, which is above.

Is free, and she is our mother. And it goes on to talk... Cities and women are often connected. And it's certainly connected in this text.

[37:22] Be glad, barren woman who never bore a child. Break forth and cry aloud, you who are never in labor. For more of the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband. We are like Isaac's children of promise.

I won't go along that too far. Okay. So, we've just identified the people. Let's turn and look at the action. While we've still got a few minutes left.

So, let's look at the action. So, can you follow the action here? So, there's the woman, and she gives birth to the child. The child is threatened by the serpent, but is snatched up to heaven.

The woman flees into the desert and gets taken care of.

So, I think that's... Yeah. The snake? No, no, no, no. The dragon gets hurled down.

[38:26] So, that's the dragon being hurled down. And the woman is given wings. And she goes into the desert. And there are her children as well. And they are protected while the devil tries to wage war against them.

Verse 17. Right. Let's see if we can break that down. Does that make sense, that bit? That's just repeating what it says. Right. Let's do this bit. So, the war in heaven, and Satan passed out from his place.

The background of this is that there is action on earth, and there is action in heaven. The action on earth is Christ and his cross. His cross, his resurrection, his ascension, his enthronement, takes us from earth to heaven.

And as he describes it, there is war in heaven, and Satan is cast out. So, let's try and look at that a little bit more.

What famous car manufacturer has Donald Trump put into a position of power? Elon Musk. Elon Musk, that's right. So, Elon Musk, who makes Tesla cars and all that sort of stuff, his office is next door to Donald Trump.

[39:51] So, Elon Musk can ring up Donald Trump and say, Hey, I've got a great idea for slimming down the federal administration infrastructure. Donald Trump will say, Yeah, if you've got that idea, that counts for something.

So, let's do it. I'll sign an executive order. He's in the place of power. Now then, this bit of action talks about Satan being in the place of power.

So, Job 2 verse 1. Let's see if we can do these fairly quickly. Anybody know what happens in Job 2 verse 1? Satan is going up and down in the courts of heaven.

I can't even find Job. Let's just see what happens. Job 2 verse 1.

One day the angels, or the sons of God, came to present themselves before the Lord. And Satan also came with them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, Where have you come from?

[40:59] And Satan answered the Lord, From roaming to and fro throughout the earth, going to and fro on it. So, he has been scouting around on earth, but he's up in heaven. He's like Elon Musk going to visit Donald Trump in the place of power.

Sorry? Yeah. Might be a bit sinister, isn't it? Let's look at another activity of Satan. This is in Zechariah 3 verse 1.

So, it's on page 950 or thereabouts, probably, if your Bible's like mine.

Page 950 or thereabouts. David McAuliffe, could you read us that one, please?

Chapter 3 verse 1. Yeah. And he showed me Joshua the high priest, and he put the angel of the Lord, and the saints to stand on his right hand to resist it.

[42:19] Well, I've got to accuse him. You accuse him. Yeah, we're going to go with accuse. Because it fits what I'd like to say. So, here is Joshua the high priest.

Standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. So, before the Lord, Satan says, you don't want to be taking any notice of this high priest. He's rubbish. He's impure. He's a sinner. He's useless. Don't take any notice of him. Just ignore him.

He doesn't deserve anything from you. If he prays, don't listen to him. If you ask him for something, refuse it. Because I accuse him. Okay? That's the accuser in heaven. Let's take another text.

Romans 8.33 So, could we please have...

[43:36] Who's got the microphone? Daniel's got the microphone. Romans 8. Romans 8. Let's do 31 to 34.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.

More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God. Who indeed is interceding for us. Thank you. Okay, let's just try and put this together.

So, we see that Satan's typical role is to accuse. That's what he did in his place of power. That's what he did against Joshua the high priest.

[44:48] You don't want to take any notice of him. Don't answer his prayers. Don't look with favour on him. Because he is guilty of all these charges. I accuse him of these charges. Now, what is being described in Revelation 12 is a change in that situation.

A step change in that situation. And it is caused by the Christ thing.

What Christ has done has produced this step change. It's put as war in heaven. A conflict. And the outcome of it is that Satan is kicked out.

Because of what Christ has done. It says here, Satan is kicked out. The accuser of the brethren is hurled down.

So, you see, we're in the same sort of situation, aren't we? As we come before God, Satan would say, you don't want to take any notice of that lot. I know what they're like.

[45:50] They're sinful. They might look very, very nice on the outside. And they're very polite to each other when they're in church. But do you know what they were thinking? Do you know what was going on in that?

Do you know what that person said? Do you know what that person did? Do you know what was going on in their heart? I accuse them. I condemn them. Yeah?

And you maybe have overheard Satan say that. Because he'll say it to you and me as well. And what Revelation says is Satan is kicked out. Because something has happened.

Because Christ has died. And Christ has borne the penalty for our sins. And he stands in heaven. And as Satan says, I accuse them.

Christ says, get out of here. What are you doing accusing these people? You've got no right to do that. I've died for these people. I've done everything to clear their account.

[46:50] There is no condemnation for these people. Get out! And that's what Satan is hurled out of heaven. He's no longer in that place where he can just pick up the phone to God and say, don't take any notice.

Get out of here! You've got nothing to do with that. The accuser is hurled out of heaven. And that's why there's this wonderful step change.

It's what the Gospel says, isn't it? Martin Luther. I've got the references for it. It is said that Satan came to him with all the list of his sins.

You did this, Martin. You said that, Martin. You thought that. You're so mean. You're so nasty. You're so lustful. You're so covetous. You're so jealous, etc. And a whole long list of them.

And Martin Luther said, if every one of those is true, they're all covered by the blood of Christ. Get out of here. And that's the Gospel, isn't it?

[47:52] There's something immensely glorious about that, isn't it? My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought. My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, oh, my soul. So there's a wonderful thing there about the Gospel. And it's there in Romans 8 and it's there in 1 John 2.

If we do sin, there's none of us who doesn't sin. We have one who speaks to the Father in our defence. We have an advocate. And in Revelation, vocabulary, he's an advocate who says to Satan, get out of here.

He speaks to the Father in our defence, an advocate, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, who is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. And that's brilliant, isn't it? It is indeed.

Okay, let's take one more thing and then we'll stop. Does that put you in your mind of any songs?

Yes. Oh, there's the one I quoted.

[49:02] There might be some others. Before the throne of God above I have a strong, a perfect plea, a great high priest, whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. We'll sing one of them before we go, shall we?

Let's come and look at the woman and just follow this for a little bit. Now then. So Satan has the wind taken out of his sails.

And the question is, well, where does that leave us? Does that mean that he's more as irrelevant? He's defeated. But is he more as irrelevant then? And the answer is no.

Which he's put here quite eloquently, isn't it? He's hurled down to the earth, he says. So in one sense he's defeated, but in another sense he's even more active.

And he's active in our sphere of things. And verse 12, end of verse 12 tells us something about his emotional state. Which is what?

[50:07] He's very angry because he knows his time is short. There's a particular anger and a particular drivenness, which I suppose makes sense in a satanic mindset, unpleasant as that is.

But it says there's a vigor to the activities of Satan. So you've got two sides to this. He's defeated, but he's also vigorously active. And he is angry and active, but we are kept safe and protected. So let's just go and look what happens. Where's the woman go to? The wilderness, the desert. There's lots of echoes of the desert in the Old Testament.

What would be the first major reference to the desert? Would it be when they're cast out of the garden?

Well, they're cast out of the garden, yeah, that's true. I'm not sure whether it's the desert, but they cast out of the garden, yeah? Exodus. Yeah, Moses, that's right.

[51:19] Sorry, I don't know whether that's me. It probably is, isn't it? The children of Israel left the place of slavery to go to the promised land, and they had to cross the desert.

And in the New Testament, that is one of the pictures of us as the church going through the desert, marching to the promised land. We're marching to Zion. Beautiful, beautiful Zion.

We're marching upwards to Zion. And in the desert, it says in Hosea, I will draw them into the desert and speak tenderly to them. The desert is a place of seriousness, and it's also a place of tenderness and care.

Is that me, or is it? Where's the other microphone? No, I don't think so. Where's the other microphone gone? Yes, maybe it's near a phone or something. In the desert, God provided manna every day.

He looked after them every day. He guided them with a fire and cloud, didn't he, in the desert. It's 3.5. That's the timing. It was a time, verse 14, time, times and half a time.

[52:35] It's three and a half years, that's right. And that time signifies a number of things, but one of them is care and provision. And the caring word, which is actually quite a...

It's the word of a woman nourishing her child, actually, is used in verse 6, a place where she can be cared for for 1,260 days.

And I think, again, that idea of cared for is in verse 14. The place prepared for her in the wilderness where she'll be taken care of for a time.

She's taken care of. The desert is... I mean, it's not arriving. It's travelling. But they're cared for in the desert.

And that's us. It sounds very tender. Pardon? It sounds very tender. It does. Yes, it does. It's a place of order, isn't it? It's been cared for. It is. It's been cared for in the desert.

[53:37] And that's encouraging for us, isn't it? That the Lord doesn't just set us off. We say, off you go, see you in 70 years or whatever it is. He cares for us through the wilderness.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Cared for. Cared for in the desert. Yeah. Cared for in the desert. And just to sort of wrap it up.

Satan tries various things. He tries this, verse 15, water like a river to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river.

The earth usually doesn't help. Anything that the earth swallowed up? Was it the people of Korat?

Yeah. Was it Nehemiah Lebeki? I can't remember. That's just in numbers. In numbers there was some rebellious folk and the earth swallowed them up. So it wasn't very nice for those people.

[54:46] The blood of Abel. Didn't the earth swallow the blood of Abel?

Yes. I didn't look that one up.

But whatever those examples. In this case, the earth is actually helpful. Because the flood. Whether it's a flood of destruction. Or I remember hearing Nick McQuaker talk about this.

And he said it's a flood of lives. That the earth helps the people. So they don't get overtaken by it.

Was it the flood of the Lord swallowed up?

Well, it abated. I don't know whether it's ever taken of swallowed. But I mean, it certainly abated, didn't it? Yes. Yes. So I've put there. There's a warfare and there's a persecution.

But there's also a protection. And going in the desert is the way to the city. Like we sang at the beginning. We're marching to the promised land.

[55:48] And that's us. So just to summarize everything. We have a powerful enemy. But he is removed from the final say-so. He's not next door to Donald Trump's office, as it were.

And there is now no condemnation for believing people. Which sometimes we have to tell ourselves that, don't we? Because it feels like Satan is absolutely right.

And in a sense he is. But we should take into account that Christ is our advocate. Satan is not dormant. He is evil in being dictated.

But God unfailingly helps his persecuted church. And it is the mark of believers that they prevail. That they overcome. That they are not defeated.

I mean, we get knocked down, but we can get back up again. And that's what believers do. And they triumph, verse 11, by two things.

[56:44] Verse 11, tell us what it says. By the blood of the Lamb. By the fact that Christ died. And by? By the word of their testimony. They keep on believing in Jesus and being prepared to speak for him.

You know, are you a Christian? Yes, I am. Do you believe that stuff about Jesus? Yes, I do. Do you believe in heaven and hell? I do, as a matter of fact.

Do you believe in heaven and hell? They overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. May the Lord help us to keep fighting and keep marching until we reach the heavenly city.

Let's sing something before we go home.