

The Devil

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[0 : 0 0] Father, your Son himself has warned us that as we hear your Word, which was just read, and as we think upon your Word together now, that it is possible for us to be one of four types of soils.

And Father, Jesus has just warned us about this. Father, you know those of us who, even as we were listening to Jesus, we did not pay attention that the devil took the words from us.

You know those of us, Father, who almost instantly were paid attention but then drifted off somewhere else. You know those of us, Father, who are too consumed with worry to really hear what you say.

We give you thanks and praise, Father, that your Son would so speak to us and warn us, and that the desire of your heart would be that we will be good soil. Father, we cannot be good soil on our own.

We ask in your mercy and in your kindness that you would so pour out your Holy Spirit upon us this morning, that we will be good soil that hears your Word and receives your Word and holds fast to your Word with joy, so that we will bear fruit with our lives, bear fruit that brings you glory.

[1 : 1 3] So, Father, please pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Make clear your Word. May it go deeply into our hearts and our wills and our minds and our lives. And this we ask in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior.

Amen. Please be seated. Okay, now I've found my stopwatch.

The devil is real.

He is our enemy. He is alive. He is active. He is doomed. And in the face of his opposition, we are to testify with our lips and with our lives of our Savior, Jesus Christ crucified.

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[2 : 2 8] The devil is real. He is not a metaphor, an analogy, a symbol, a process, a myth, or a mere storybook character.

He is not a primitive way of talking about mental illness or evil. Even though politicians have evilly used the devil to demonize other people, their misuse is not the proper use.

The devil is not a tool of politicians to label others or enemies and stir up mobs and armies to battle.

The devil is not misunderstood. He is not a hero. He is not a rebel. He is not a freedom fighter. He is not hip. He is not cool.

He is not the yin or the yang to God. He is not an antithesis leading to a new synthesis. He is not energy.

[3 : 3 2] He is not our friend. He is not our ally. He is not our means. He is not our tool. He is not a joke. And in ourselves, he is more powerful than we are.

The devil is real. He is our enemy. He is alive. He is active. He is doomed. And in the face of his opposition, we are to testify with our lips and with our lives of our Savior, Jesus Christ, crucified.

If the devil does not exist, then the two Bible passages that we read are a complete and utter waste of time.

If the devil does exist, then today's passages are unbelievably practical and important.

So, today, my sermon will be a little bit more like a Bible study than a proper sermon. I really only have one point. And I'm going to keep saying that one point.

[4 : 42] I've already said it three times. I'm going to say it a fourth time. The devil is real. He is our enemy. He is alive. He is active. He is doomed.

And in the face of his opposition, we are to testify with our lips and with our lives of our Savior, Jesus Christ, crucified. That's the message of Revelation 12. So, if you have your Bibles, please open them up to Revelation 12, and we're going to read the text, mindful of what it is that the Bible is teaching.

that there is in existence a real devil who stands in opposition to us. As I stand and speak to you right now, he stands in opposition of what I say.

So, any Sunday, if you've forgotten your Bible or you don't own a Bible, there's always some Bibles up here at the front. You're always welcome to take it, and if you want, you can keep it as a gift from us. So, Revelation 12, let's look at the first six verses, which gives a sort of a vignette, an overview, in very, very powerful imagery of the basic story of the devil.

In just six verses with very, very powerful imagery. And for some of us, if you're like me, I'm not actually a very visual type of person, although I really love watching movies, but I like words the most, I like sort of ideas the most, and that means probably that when I read certain, like, Colossians or something, like, I'm reading something in my sweet spot.

[6 : 17] Others of you like poetry, and you like playful types of things. Others of you like images, and the Bible is for the whole, all human beings, and so, here the Bible, in its most concentrated teaching on the devil, will use powerful images, and for those of you who are, who love images, this will teach you very powerfully.

And so, here we get this, these first six verses go like this, and a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head, a crown of twelve stars.

She was pregnant, so neat that as soon as I said she was pregnant, a baby made a noise, isn't it? Do you know how hard it is to organize things like that in a sermon? It takes weeks, we practiced every day just for a baby to make a noise just at that exact right time.

She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And just sort of pause here. We'll go through the whole story to get you the whole vignette, and then we'll go back.

So, verse two, she was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth, and another sign appeared in heaven. Behold, a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

[7 : 36] His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth, and the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

She gave birth to a male child, one who was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God in which she is to be nourished for 1260 days.

Sort of a very powerful image, as I've joked or said several weeks in advance, I actually asked Jeremiah to play a Christmas carol today because there's an obvious connection to the Christmas story.

You might not remember, but in the book of Revelation it's a book about Jesus, about what he's done, what he's doing, and what he will do. And so here we get a story that includes the birth of Jesus, something which has happened when John wrote this about almost, well, over 90 years prior to John writing this.

This is when Jesus would have been born. And so let's just sort of capture some of the images. Who is the woman? Look again, verse 1, and a great sign, and it's the same word that's used if you read John's Gospel, it keeps calling, it calls the, John calls the miracles of Jesus in John's Gospel, he calls them signs.

[9 : 00] And he means that they're a mighty act of God, something that God does, which points to something, which points to, I mean, in and of itself, it's real, but it not only is real, it's like a window, and it's like a window with someone pointing to ask you to look at some great reality, some great truth, some great insight, or wisdom, or stark knowledge that comes from God.

And so the vision begins, and a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of 12 stars, and she was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

And in a sense, what we capture here is that John gets a vision of Israel, he gets a vision of Eve, and he gets a vision of her lineage of which the Messiah would be born, and he has a vision of Abraham, and he has a vision of Isaac and Jacob, and he has a vision of Israel and all of its history because the woman is Israel.

The imagery comes, if you go back and read the book of Genesis, the imagery comes from the story of Joseph and his dream that he tells before he's sent off to Pharaoh, before he has all of his misadventures because his brothers sell him to slave traders, and the imagery comes from Joseph's dream of the moon and the sun and the 12 stars, and so the woman is Israel, and John pictures Israel from whom the Messiah will come because salvation, as Paul says in Romans, salvation is from the Jews.

Salvation is from the Jews, Romans 2, and he pictured as a woman in glory, a great sign, and then it moves to the dragon, and notice immediately how the dragon is dethroned.

[11 : 02] The woman is a great sign, but the dragon is just another sign, another sign. Verse 3, and another sign appeared in heaven.

Behold, a great red dragon. Think of Smaug, those of you who've seen the movie, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth, and the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth so that when she bore her child, he might devour it, he might eat it.

I'm not going to see that in a Christmas pageant very often, although maybe it would be very interesting to do an adult pageant with a whole pile of adults dressed up like a Chinese dragon waiting to eat the baby as it emerges from the womb.

And here, John is seeing something even older than the birth of Israel, even older than Genesis 2 and Genesis 3, even older.

[12 : 16] John has a vision of what happened long before there were any human beings of the ancient rebellion led by a powerful archangel that captured the hearts and the minds or whatever the equivalent is for an angel of a third of all of the angels and a third of the angels joined the devil, the great dragon in his rebellion against God.

A third of them fall from their place in God's glory and his splendor in the heavens. A third of them follow him and they fall from heaven. They're thrown down and they come to the earth and they are aware of the great sign of the woman.

The devil is aware of the great sign of the woman and the significance of the child and so it is that the devil is there waiting to devour. And for those of you who know the Bible, all of a sudden you hear Matthew chapter 2 and Herod and all of a sudden you're thinking of the early parts of Matthew and of Luke and of the devil tempting Jesus in the wilderness and all of a sudden you're thinking of the book of John and how after Jesus institutes the Last Supper that the devil enters Judas and Judas goes out to betray Jesus that he might be killed, a shameful criminal's death, that the Jewish people, that the mother, that the mother would turn on the child and hand the child to the devil for his death.

All of that captured in this powerful image. And then the story continues. She gave birth, verse 5, to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.

But her child was caught up to God and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God in which she is to be nourished for 1260 days, three and a half years.

[14 : 07] And here, in a very, very short, powerful image, in a sense, you get the whole picture of the gospel. You get Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all completely and utterly compacted that the devil who desires to devour Jesus, the baby, will be born and at the end of the day the baby will be beside God in heaven no longer as a baby but the one who rules the nations.

And the woman, Israel, the woman, the people of God is in a place of wilderness which means that as it is always the case, as it is the case for our congregation today, even though we do not picture ourselves as dwelling in a wilderness but picture ourselves in post-modern, post-industrial, highly affluent Canada that just won a gold medal in men's hockey and we don't think of ourselves or understand ourselves as being in the wilderness but the image of a wilderness in God's nourishment is that God's people always are completely and utterly dependent upon God for being fed and for being protected and for staying the people of God and that it's never a matter of us being able to do this purely and utterly in our own strength because we always dwell in a wilderness after Genesis 3 that we are completely and utterly dependent upon the nourishment and the grace that comes from our Heavenly Father.

The devil is real. He is our enemy. He is alive. He is active. He is doomed. And in the face of his opposition, we are to testify with our lips and with our lives of our Savior, Jesus Christ, of our Savior, Jesus Christ, crucified.

The Bible, this text, God wants us to take the devil seriously but he doesn't want us to take him in a brooding way. He doesn't want us to obsess about the devil.

He doesn't want us to be fearful of the devil and he does not want us to take the devil on his own terms. He wants us to be attentive, to be prayerful, to be realistic, and to be confident in him.

[16 : 22] Now, I don't mean to insult anybody here. I really don't. But one of the problems that we have is that we think that we're smarter than the ancients.

And we don't quite put it into words but we think that because we have running water and flush toilets and we have fancy smartphones and we have a lot of money and we have antibiotics.

By the way, none of which we've made. I mean, maybe there's one person here who could figure out how to make a smartphone. Maybe I'm insulting you here. Maybe there's two people in the room who could actually figure out how to make a smartphone.

The rest of us just know how to play with the icons, okay? But part of our modern world and I don't mean to insult you because it's all of us is that we have this very, very deep conceit that because we have running water and flush toilets and indoor plumbing and iPhones and all of that that we're somehow smarter than ancient people and there's no question that our culture is far better with technology and techniques and science than the ancients but we definitely aren't smarter than them.

We're definitely not smarter than them and in fact you want to know something that one of the problems just, you know, talk to maybe Gary Graber afterwards or something he could point you to some ancient text but one of the problems that we have often if we read like the church fathers, people who are writing in like the 3rd and 4th and 5th century but one of the problems we have and even later like guys like Aquinas and guys like Calvin even later, one of the problems we have is that their use of language is so subtle and so careful and so reasoned and so balanced we can't follow it.

[18 : 09] we have a hard time reading it and then we think oh well we're just smarter than them. We can't actually follow the subtlety of their thought and so here this becomes very important because you see the Bible is an ancient text.

I'm reading right now a very very fascinating story. It's, I don't know how many of you have read it. I'm really loving it. It's by a woman by the name of Rosaria Champagne Butterfield and she was a postmodern literary critic a queer theorist head of the woman's studies faculty at Syracuse University and it describes her conversion and it's a fascinating read about how for some of us when we came to Christ it was maybe a bit traumatic but relatively easy but for someone like her to come to faith as she describes it, it was a train wreck and it's, she's very, very, very, very articulate in the problem that she has as a postmodern scholar taking the Bible seriously and the whole conflict within her as she's drawn to the Bible yet at the same time all of the habits of her thought make her despise the Bible.

It is great reading. You have to order it on Amazon or something like that but I highly recommend, I'll probably do a blog about it so you can find it a bit more easily. But you see the thing is that when we come now to Revelation 12 because we're so used to just thinking we're smarter and because we just like to gallop through things we don't sort of capture the subtleties of this piece of writing that John did almost 2,000 years ago and it's a very, very subtle writing because you see first what John does is he gives us this vignette, this powerful encapsulated teaching of the devil and then he's going to give a series of three other sort of things which sort of play on this first story and as he plays on the story he brings out new truths for us to understand but if we gallop through the text we just think he's contradicting himself but you know what?

Ancient writers understood contradictions and so when we read the Bible rather than reading the Bible and thinking that it's filled with contradictions the better question to ask is what is the subtlety?

what is it? How is the Bible asking us to slow down and ponder and meditate and note the subtlety rather than race through and think it's contradictory?

[20 : 41] And so John does an act of great subtlety so the first story tells of the dragon with his tail sweeping down a third of the stars of heaven now in verses seven to nine he's going to return to that story and look at it from a different angle let's listen verses seven to nine now war arose in heaven he's still going back to before Genesis chapter one Genesis chapter two Genesis long before that he's going back and he's telling the story again bringing out subtleties of that initial story with these three simple verses once again with very powerful images now war arose in heaven Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon and the dragon and his angels fought back but he that's the dragon was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven and the great dragon was thrown down that ancient serpent who was called the devil and Satan the deceiver of the whole world he was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him and in the original language it's the language is instantaneous it's as if it's as if in a movie that I'm talking to you and all of a sudden as I'm talking to you like this my hands are still moving

I'm still talking to you but all of a sudden I find that I'm on Parliament Hill talking and it just happens like this and that's the language that there's this mighty act of power that comes upon the devil and his angels which we now know of as demons and they think they're fighting Michael and all and the next moment they're not they're here they're here read the Narnia Chronicles read all of the Narnia Chronicles and all of your questions about how time and heaven and different times all work and Lewis will challenge and incite and give you all sorts of interesting insights about time and Narnia time and earth time and time and time of this battle and our time and how it works together serious suggestion by the way read the Narnia Chronicles for wisdom about this but this is the story different way of telling of the third falling down and note once again how it is that the member at the beginning I said I said that the devil is not either yin or yang to God he is not the antithesis to God leading to a new synthesis he is not like that in the text in a very very subtle way completely and utterly dethrones the devil the devil might like to be betrayed and many people in our culture betray him as if it's somehow the devil versus God but who fights?

Michael I mean God I mean it's not like even like like the championship fighter of the world trying to fight some old guy like me I mean it's it's not even in the picture the devil doesn't even reach the level of fighting God he fights Michael the devil and his angels now known as demons fight Michael and the angels and gets completely and utterly defeated he gets thrown down helpless in a moment and now finds himself on earth and the text describes in a very very very powerful way the very very nature of who it is that the who the devil is in fact in these verses here in these verses in this very very powerful and important verse verse 9 and the great dragon was thrown down that ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan the deceiver of the whole world he was thrown down from the earth to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him in this very very powerful passage we will understand the most common way that you or I will experience the devil on Friday

Thursday and Friday and Saturday technically I was in Vancouver I left for Vancouver on Thursday morning I came back Saturday afternoon actually I was supposed to leave Thursday morning but my plane steering didn't work and the pilot wisely thought maybe that's not a good idea to take off when the steering doesn't work so we actually spent like four or five hours in the airport so we arrive in Vancouver and I'm going to Vancouver because I'm on the board of the Anglican Network in Canada the denomination we're part of and it's a board meeting and the primate is there and all the bishops are there and lots of it's a full room important people and I've been asked by the bishop to do the morning devotional 20 minutes and on Friday morning and I have to stand up at the table and my notes are way down low and I because my notes are way down low as I'm in my talk I realize that I've lost my place and I'm wandering around in my talk and it's a terrible thing for a speaker to realize that they've lost their place in their notes and they don't quite know how to get back to it and I did the best

I could and I wrapped the talk up and I sit down in my seat but the second I sat down in my seat instantly I just felt that I had done a terrible job I felt guilty I didn't even feel like I could raise my eyes and look at people and even though later on during the coffee break I had six, seven, eight people tell me how good the talk was how much it meant to them that it was spirit anointed I just was so overwhelmed with this sense of accusation and condemnation I'd done a terrible job that I'd let the bishop down it colored everything I was experiencing and this lasted for 24 hours and it was only the very next day like about 24 hours later that I'm on the plane I'm working on my sermon and I realize that the very thing that's being talked about in the text here is what I actually have been experiencing for 24 hours what I had been experiencing was more than just having made a mistake and having messed up what I was experiencing was a profound sense of condemnation and accusation that was different than conscience

[26 : 42] I don't know if any of you have had that experience but if you've had any type of experience of great internal accusation and condemnation then you have experienced the devil's touch because it tells us right here the very fundamental way that most of us will experience the devil in our lives and I'm not talking about conscience I mean there's sometimes I've done I have done some very bad things in my life and you probably have done some very bad things in your lives as well things that if we were to share them openly we would other people we would be horrified by it and there is a proper place for guilt and the proper place of guilt is to realize that we've done something wrong and to feel some type of sorrow an appropriate amount of sorrow and to turn to God and ask for forgiveness and to make an amendment of life and ask forgiveness for the person that we have wronged and there is a sense whereby there can be an appropriate type of memory of the wrong that we have done but this is radically different from being locked and imprisoned in a time of accusation and condemnation that colors everything that you say and everything that you feel and all that's going on around you and it was while I was flying back

I was thinking here I am talking about this and I didn't even recognize that I was experiencing it and verse 9 is so powerful and the great dragon was thrown down defeated that ancient serpent brings you up the idea of Genesis 3 and the serpent leading to the fall of the human race it's the same word who is called the devil and Satan Hebrew and Greek words so that both Hebrew speakers and Greek and Latin speakers would get the point and both of them mean accuser destroying accuser who wants to condemn not just somebody who says yeah yeah I think that person's guilty it is accuser that's the very very nature of who it is that we have to deal with the deceiver of the whole world the deceiver the accuser of the whole world and many of us maybe have not experienced demonic great great demonic oppression or involved in witchcraft maybe there are some in here who that's part of your story maybe it's part of what's brought you here this morning you have not yet come to Jesus but here's the fundamental thing

I guess I'm going to say two things the first thing is this that in light of this sense of condemnation and accusation there are six really important words for us to learn and I meant to look it up I can't it's not my words it's somebody else's and maybe some of you will later on tell me who it is but it's these six very important words in my place condemned he stood the cross when Satan tempts us to despair word of a hymn when we get imprisoned in condemnation and accusation there are human means that we can do and use to help with this it might be that a conversation with a friend will really help it might be that a pat on a shoulder or a hug will really help it might be that like maybe in my case

I go for a run and that can help and there are really good things you know a cup of tea a cup of coffee a friend's pat on the back a hug you know from someone who loves you just you know some time these are all good things and God doesn't despise such common ordinary means of grace and of experiencing his goodness but the primary thing that we need to remember and that the devil will want us to forget completely and utterly about is as his voice is loud and insistent and persistent we are to remember I am to remember you are to remember six simple words thinking about Jesus dying on the cross in his sorry in my place condemned he stood in my place condemned he stood all those accusations all that condemnation he loved me enough and he loved you enough that thought that it was worth it out of his love for the father and his love for you and his love for me that in my place condemned he stood six words for the rest of your life in my place condemned he stood here's the other thing some of us will experience a far greater touch of Satan in our lives and I am going to be very very unhip and I am going to be very uncool and

I am going to tell you this have nothing to do with Ouija boards have nothing to do with crystals have nothing to do with seances have nothing to do with spells or any type of magic whether white or black have nothing to do with parapsychology do not seek out types of meditation or trances that involve animal guides or other physical objects as your guides avoid all mantras where you do not know the words or any type of repetition that does not involve exalting Jesus flee from such things flee from talismans flee from idols flee from spirit guides flee from trying to learn levitation flee from learning out of body experiences flee from seeking anything to do with extraterrestrials any psychic flee flee and flee not to not to me I mean we will pray for you but flee to

[33 : 03] Jesus and the story continues how's my time we're doing good remember I said there was a subtlety so there's this big story in six verses then there's these three verses where there's a focus on on Satan and his nature and then there's three verses in my in my version ESV it's written as prose but it's actually should be written as poetry it's a hymn of victory and it's verses 10 to 12 here it is and I heard a loud voice in heaven saying and in this in the original language this word saying implies music as well now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come for the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down who accuses them day and night before our God and they that is those who are in

Jesus have conquered him how have they conquered him because we're cute because we're smart because we have flush toilets because we know how to use an iPod because we think we're very very clever where we're very athletic where we're very rich how have we conquered him and they have conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony for they love not their lives even unto death therefore rejoice oh heavens in you who dwell in them but woe to you oh earth and sea for the devil has come down to you in great wrath because he knows that his time is short I guess really there's a two point sermon in my place condemned he stood the other point the devil is real he is our enemy he is alive he is active he is doomed and in the face of his opposition we are to testify with our lips and with our lives of our savior Jesus Christ crucified and that's what this tells us and it's very neat look again at verse 11 and they have conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony for they loved not their lives even unto death and you know the wonderful thing about that in the original language see in

English you can only translate translators have to make a choice when they translate a phrase in another language which could be translated equally two different ways I mean it has a double meaning in the original language but there's no English equivalent to a double meaning and this testimony and here's where it says and their testimony sorry by the word of their testimony it also means God's it means not only it also is at the same time saying God's testimony about me it's a wonderful wonderful thing and some of your translations might make it sound as if it's God making a testimony about me but in the original language it does both at the same time and so in the face of in the face of opposition of the devil we are to testify to Jesus when Satan tempts me to despair I'm to testify about Jesus when all of a sudden a conversation at a Starbucks or a hockey rink or in my neighborhood or at my workplace and the conversation could turn to the things of God and instantly we think of all these reasons why we should not say anything we are to understand that we are being tempted by the devil to not testify to

Jesus and in the face of opposition we are to testify to Jesus and not only is it our testimony of him but he says of me George George George be gripped by the gospel you are my disciple be gripped by the gospel I have chosen you in Jesus you are mine the devil might say all sorts of words of accusation against you but I get the final word and when even the worst person puts their faith and trust in Jesus then we know in advance what God's final word will be about us and whether it is when Jesus returns or whether it is that I die before he returns the scriptures tell us we are going to see it later on in the book of Revelation he says to us to you and me in Jesus I am so glad you are home come into the kingdom the place that I have prepared for you to spend all eternity with me as my precious beloved child very quickly the last few verses verse 13 and when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth now it is a different thing it is a different image it is the subtlety of the text and the subtlety of the text is going to be very careful here because the image of the woman is going to change it is going to transmorphify as these last images go along that John is asking us not just to race through the text and think that it is filled with contradictions but to notice a very very curious type of transformation that happens to the woman in this final final concluding vignette that sort of builds on the previous hymn of victory and the previous vignette and the opening story and to listen to who the woman is of course and here it has verse 13 and when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child but the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle in other words the woman grows wings it's as if she becomes a completely new creature it's as if all of a sudden you're out there one day and you see a horse in a field and all of a sudden if the horse was to take odd wings and fly away you would know it's no longer a horse it's a different creature a creature of myth like in a sense we have here a little bit of picture of what happens to all of us the bible describes that we become new creations like on one level when I become a child of God through faith in Jesus

Christ by faith of what he has done for me upon the cross his finished work upon the cross on one level I remain myself but another level I become a completely new creation it's almost as if I grow wings and so do you not in my own power I can't do that it's only something that God can do only God can do that only God and when the dragon saw verse 13 that he had been thrown down to the earth he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child he pursued Israel but the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness and here we have all of the imagery of Exodus and Deuteronomy and of Isaiah I will rise up on wings like eagles and all of the imagery of the Old Testament is being captured if you read a commentary it will go pages and pages and pages of the imagery which is being encapsulated here in these few words but the woman verse 14 was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness to the place where she is to be nourished once again still God's people for a time and times and half a time the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with a flood it's an image of lies and deception and aggression which he wants to drown the woman in but the earth came to the help of the woman and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth spewed from his mouth then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring on those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus and it's a very powerful imagery and you know in the very very first story in the six verses on one level it's

[41 : 06] Israel giving birth to Messiah on the other hand the very end of course all of a nation can't give birth to a child so at the end of the image it's not only Israel but it's Israel becoming at that point that God's purposes of Israel become real that salvation is from the Jews when Jesus is born of Mary and now we see the woman the same people of God throughout all history the same people of God right from the point of Genesis 4 and on and now the people of God are not just Israel but now it is Israel with wings it's describing the church it's describing the church us the church is the church and the people who make up the church and the devil's war against us see that's why I say the devil is real he is our enemy he is alive he is active he is doomed and in the face of his opposition we are to testify with our lips and with our lives of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ crucified

I just want to close by reading the passage from Romans chapter 8 could you all stand you don't have to open your Bibles it's Romans 8 verses 33 and following actually I'm going to read from verse 31 and following Romans 8 31 and I just want to read these words over you and then we'll pray remember in my place condemned he stood Christian life begins when we accept that as true of us and we it begins with that and it never ends every second is lived with it that's why we are to be gripped by the gospel and as we're gripped by the gospel we're enabled to bring God glory what then shall we say Romans chapter 8 31 what shall we then say to these things if God is for us who can be against us he who did not spare his own son

I didn't think I was going to be emotional he who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us how will he not also with him graciously give us that's you and me who are in him 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 who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword or having a building as it is written for your sake we are being killed all the day long we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered no in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us for I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in

Christ Jesus our Lord do I hear an Amen Let's pray Father we ask that your Holy Spirit would move mightily in us that we would be gripped by the gospel that you would make us disciples that are day by day gripped by the gospel to bring glory to you we give you thanks and praise that for Jesus on his cross that in my place in our place condemned he stood Father this truth of the gospel may it grip us may it grip us and transform and push and pull and shape and ground how we live our day how we confess our sins how we testify to you how we are bold for you how we are humbled by for you and humble for you Father may it grip us and we ask this in the name of Jesus your son and our savior Amen