

10.18.20

## Revelation

### Chapter 12 - Revealing Why God is so Passionate The Dragon Powerfully Seeking to Devor (vs. 3-4)

**Revelation 12:1-4:** A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

One of the things that I so appreciate about the Book of Revelation is that it demonstrates the passion of God.

Unfortunately, I think that people can easily get immersed into the signs and wonders and miss the message. And I think that's unfortunate. That really, the Book of Revelation is revealing to us just how passionate God feels about His love for us. And so, He begins to convey this, and specifically to the church. As He writes to the seven churches of Asia Minor at the very beginning, and we begin to see these pictures which are to move our hearts, we see the picture of Christ, His face like the sun, and you see His fervor with His feet like bronze on fire; His longing to bring the message of peace to us. And there, as He stands among the seven candlesticks, are nothing less than the churches in which He has ordained to send out this wonderful message of light.

So, it is in Matthew 5 that Matthew so clearly writes through the lips of Jesus Christ as He talks to His church, “Let your light so shine before men, that they might see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” That “so shine” is actually demonstrating that our light should shine in such a way that it would demonstrate the effervescence of God. How do you do that? And what

exactly does that look like? That's an interesting question, isn't it?

Ephesians 5:8 will say that we are to walk as children of Light because we now are Light. And so, as He talks to the church and begins to demonstrate these marvelous signs, we begin to understand what He wants the church to do. Because quite frankly, it's very easy for the church to grow complacent. It's very easy for the church to compromise and get immersed in the things of the world. It's very easy for us to get sidetracked and begin to make other things the important matter rather than the thing that really is important. So, as He writes to the churches, He says, "This is important."

Now, how do you convey to the churches just how important something is? And as you come to the end of Revelation 11 and you begin to see these pictures of the heavens, God is stirring us up and He says, "This is how important it is." And the intensity of it begins to, shall we say, spark out lightning bolts and fire and flames. When we oftentimes think of "let your light so shine before men," I don't think most of us think in terms of lightning

bolts. I don't think most of us think in terms of great flames coming out. But I actually believe that's what God had intended. Because what you're seeing at the end of Revelation 11 is the passion of God. And I think what's lacking in churches is their passion for God and His love for mankind. I think that's missing. In fact, when you read the Book of Ephesians, it really is to stir up the church that is kind of immersing themselves in a kind of legalism. He is stirring them up, and He says, "Look, it's like a husband and wife. I mean, that's the way the relationship ought to be." So, He's stirring up, and how do you convey to a guy that maybe has become complacent in his relationship with the girl, the girl with the guy? How do you stir up the relationship? And you say, bring back the mystery. So, the one thing that He'll repeat over and over again in the Book of Ephesians is the word "mystery". You see it repeated more times than not. And it's Him stirring up that sense of, because you lose the mystery of the relationship. I think one of the greatest things, one of the greatest mysteries of our faith is that the God of the universe would love us. What a mystery that is. Try to

figure that one out. Why would He love dust that much to die for us?

You read the Gospel of John, and you begin to see the mystery of that love and so intense it is and so comfortable it is that John would even be able to lean against the Savior. That Christ would repeat over and over again in the 15th chapter of John, "Would you stay with Me? Would you stay with Me?" That in the midst of Him getting ready to be crucified, He would turn to His disciples, and He says, "I don't want you to be troubled. But I do want you to know something. I'm willing to die for you." I don't know. I'm feeling the flashes. I'm feeling the intensity of His love for us.

And so, if you come to the end of Revelation 11, it's always appropriate because really verse 19, ties into, and they probably shouldn't have put 12 where they did. They should have put 12 right after 18. But nevertheless, they didn't ask me at that time. And I'm not taking away from Scripture because originally the text didn't have any numbers or any of that. So, it's not necessarily biblical that they put the numbers there. But the point is that

verse 19 is actually that which segues, and that's why you have the conjunction in verse 1 of Chapter 12, "and," because it is literally tying to the verse 19 of Chapter 11. What we see in verse 19 of Chapter 11 is the temple of God, or more specifically, the heart of God. We know that God is omnipresent. Where can you go from His presence? He exists everywhere. But when it makes reference to the temple of God, it's making reference to really the heart of what is most important to God. And so, it's like He opens up His heart and He says, "Come on in. Let Me show you what's inside." And much to our surprise, it is the ark of the covenant that's in His heart; that a God of the universe, of all the things that He could be really concerned about or thinking about, I mean, He's got all these angelic beings that are far more powerful than we are, and thousands upon thousands; well, one astrologer would say billions; billions upon billions of galaxies out there. Can you imagine, why would He be concerned about this one little planet and this speck of a person on the planet? Why would He be concerned about me? But He is. And so, this ark of the covenant sits in the middle. Now, once again, the fact that He declares it as

ark of the covenant is, in the Greek, making reference to last will and testament. In other words, it's God's heart that He longs for us to have what this box is about. And that's one of the great emphasis of this.

When you read about ark, and we've talked about this, and I don't want to belabor the subject, but when you read about Noah's ark in the Old Testament, "*tēbâ*" is the Hebrew word that is used. It is translated, "coffer," more specifically, it is like a treasure chest. And what Scripture is telling us is, as He puts these that He loves so much, and He says, "Noah and your family," He said, "We treasure you. You eight will go into this box and We'll keep you safe." You think about the purpose of a treasure chest which was made to protect valuables. And so, they get in this box. And God takes them through the waters, or through death and brings them out, and of course there are eight of them, it's like the number of resurrection day, and they're resurrected, they come out. God is painting a picture. The same is true when you come to Exodus and you begin to read the beginning in which Moses' mother was very concerned about "How

will we keep this child?" Because they're slaying children. So, she puts him in a basket. It is the same word that is used for Noah's ark, by the way. It is the word "*tēbā*". And she put him in this little ark, and she put tar pitch all around it, just like the ark. And he goes through the waters, and perhaps in her mind, maybe the child will live, maybe the child will die, but the child lived. And the name "Moses" becomes the name "drawn out of water." And so, the goodness of the Lord is revealed, and that ark paints a picture.

By the time you come to the end of Genesis and you come to Chapter 50, we have the death of Joseph and on the tail of the declaration of the death of his father. So, it was a number of years that passed, but both seemed to emphasize the death of both Jacob and Joseph. And the point is that they were both tucked away, and more specifically, put in a coffin. And their bones were literally to be taken back home and buried there. Jacob's request is, "I want you to bury me with my father's." And so, he'll be placed in the same cave as Abraham, Sarah, Isaac,

they'll all be in the same cave, and his wife. So, all of these will be in the same cave.

And as mentioned, if you look with me in Genesis 49, it says,

(Genesis 49:28) "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him.

(Genesis 49:29) Then he charged them and said to them, "I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

(Genesis 49:30) in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site.

(Genesis 49:31) There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah."

"I want to go home."

So, the request is taken, and the same request is basically given in Genesis 50:26, when Joseph turns to his brothers, he says, “And when I die, I want to be taken home too.”

And the text reads this way,

(Genesis 50:26) “So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years...”

I think his father was 147.

“... and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin...”

It is not “*tēbâ*” that is used in this text. It is “*'ārôn*”. And more specifically, the emphasis of this particular word, though “*tēbâ*” could be for coffin, the emphasis is more treasure chest, where in this particular context, “*'ārôn*” is making reference to a coffin. What's interesting is that the coffins, and I know we're dealing with Egyptians here, but the coffins that were made for the children of Israel specifically really came out of the idea of the Ur of the Chaldeans. And if you've ever done any research about coffins, which I'm pretty sure you probably haven't, one of those things that you just don't plan on doing on a given day, “Hey, hon, let's talk about coffins from

Babylon.” But anyway, they actually made coffins about the size of a bathtub. The archaeologists actually call them “bathtub coffins”. And the size of them was interesting to me. I actually, the other day, got out my measuring stick and started measuring my bathtub. And it was pretty much about the same all the way around, about 4 feet by about 2, 2 1/2 feet, somewhere in that neighborhood. What's interesting is that that's almost exactly the measurements of the ark of the covenant. And when it refers to the ark of the covenant, it will not use the word “*tēbâ*,” it will use the word “*'ārôn*,” which is coffin. So, what God was having man build was a coffin; a coffin to have rings in it in which they would often put rings in their coffin. Interestingly enough, when they would make these bathtub coffins, they would sometimes make them out of wood, and then they would put bronze around them. Cyrus was actually buried in one that had gold put around it. Does that not sound like the ark of the covenant? So that as God was calling them to build this chest, which would be a chest in which the most valuable things were placed into, the Book of Hebrews in Chapter 9 will remind us what those things were. The manna from

heaven, the rod of Aaron, the commandments of God. And when you look at all those things, it's basically God saying, "This is what should be on your heart. This is what I'd long for you to have on your heart." What is that? Well, the manna for heaven is the provision of God. That we would turn to God for all of our provision. "Man should not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." That the trust should be in Him and the provision of God should be at the very center of our heart. That the relationship is, we believe that God is the provider. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. We believe that He's the source of all of our being, and we give Him praise for this. The second obviously made reference to the Aaron rod, which was the approval of God. And this should certainly be on our heart, just as it should be on the heart of any who desire to follow God, that You would approve us, and we would say, "Well, what's the sign of God's approval upon us?" And the sign would always be resurrection.

Acts 17 says, how do you know that Jesus was the guy that God appointed to be His leader? He was the only One

raised from the dead. So, that rod budding was life out of a dead stick. And it was that wonderful picture of God's appointed favor upon us. And that should be on our heart, that God's grace would be upon me, that His favor would be upon me, His face would shine upon me, that He would bring life out of death out of this soul; that would be the longing of my heart. And of course, the last, of course, was the Ten Commandments, the commandments of God. And you know, when you think about the commandments, one thing that's repeated over and over again, especially in Deuteronomy, is that God says, "I gave you these because I love you. I gave these commandments for your good, that your life will be successful." And you can just hear in the heart of God going, "I want you to be successful. I want you to have a happy life. Just do what I tell you to do and everything will be fine." You can hear the parental encouragement in the heart of God. Well, all three of these things our Lord and Savior had in His heart, "I am the manna. I am the bread that comes out of heaven," He says. He says, "If you believe in Me, even if you die, you'll live again. Don't think that I came to nullify the Law. I came to fulfill the Law."

And all these things were on the heart of Christ. This will literally be the coffin of Christ. And the magnificent thing is that you'll see these angels bowing down, angels who were those guardians of the Law, and they would say, "There is one thing more powerful than the Law; it is the mercy seat of Christ." And the mercy seat of Christ takes on the predominant position. Why is this at the heart of the temple in heaven? Because this is what's most important to God. And the text begins to read of the flashes of lightning coming forth from this. And this is not show. These are not just fireworks. This is God saying, "This is what is powerful." And Paul will say, it is the power that we believe changes lives. But unfortunately, the church is not proclaiming that power with the same passion that they should be. It is the passion of Christ that would turn to His disciples and say, "Stay with Me. I'm going to die so you can be with Me." His ultimate prayer in John 17 is, "Dad, don't let them not be with Me. They've got to come with Me." And you can hear that desire and that love. This is what's oftentimes missing in the church, and God is stirring it up through wonderful pictures.

What's going to happen by the time we come to Revelation 16 is the seven bowls of wrath of God. Once again, the initial thought of man is, "God's just so mean and He's so angry all the time." And that's why it's so necessary for you and I to read Chapter 11, Chapter 12, Chapter 13, Chapter 14, 15, and then going to 16. Because in those middle chapters, He begins to paint these pictures of where His upset is. As we talked about last week, it's not as much God being angry at something as His love generated for something that is causing this passion to move. He begins that description in Chapter 12. And immediately, what He wants you to see is this woman that is deeply loved. I have this sign up in our room upstairs, and the sign says something like, "If love was water, I'd give you the ocean." And God is saying in this particular passage, "I gave her the sun. I gave her the moon." What is He trying to tell us? There's no one that He loved more than this woman. Why does He put it in the context of a woman? Because we can relate to that. That's the whole purpose of Song of Songs. God's the inventor of romance. And if you don't understand that, read Song of Songs. And you'll understand that whole

sense of passion that maybe you once had, that whole sense of passion which maybe you have now, is that which God had created in us to cause us to see just how wonderful it can be to have a deep and wonderful relationship. So, He's putting it in the context of woman. Now, we understand, and look, there's been some debate that this woman is the church or whatever, and it doesn't change the meaning that terrible much, but the text to me is pretty clear. He's talking about His own people, specifically Israel. Now, why is He telling the church about this? Because the church is connected to the woman through the Son that she bears, and the child that comes brings us in as the children of God. So, we're definitely in on this, because if, in fact, the wife is so beloved, how loved do you think the child is? And the whole purpose was that this woman would bear this child to be a Savior. It goes all the way back to Eve. And so, we're going to see that.

But if you look at the beginning, it says in verse 1,

(Revelation 12:1) “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.”

Now, once again, Daniel 12 makes mention of the fact that God is going to call His people and make them 12 stars in the heavens. And usually, that's the emphasis. I think if He was making reference to the church, He would go back to Revelation 1 and say 7 stars, because there was a 7 lampstands and the 7 stars. But because He says the 12, I think He's making reference to Israel specifically, and God calling out the woman and preserving. The reason why He preserved this nation was what? So that she would bring forth a child. Who was the child? The Messiah. So, that was the whole purpose. But what Scripture is wanting to reveal is that God was intensely in love and that this child is coming out because of love, not for any other reason. And that's the purpose of the whole relationship.

So, if you look with me in Isaiah 62, and we'll move on from this because we talked about it last week. But if you look with me in Isaiah 62, you can hear the heart of God

in this particular chapter if you look at the first 5 verses specifically.

It starts off this way,

(Isaiah 62:1) “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,  
And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not keep quiet,  
Until her righteousness goes forth like brightness,  
And her salvation like a torch that is burning.

(Isaiah 62:2) The nations will see your righteousness,  
And all kings your glory;  
And you will be called by a new name  
Which the mouth of the LORD will designate.

(Isaiah 62:3) You will also be a crown of beauty in the  
hand of the LORD,  
And a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

(Isaiah 62:4) It will no longer be said to you, “Forsaken,”  
Nor to your land will it any longer be said, “Desolate”;  
But you will be called, “My delight is in her,”  
And your land, “Married” ...”

That's where you get the song “Beulah Land”. We're going to Beulah land. “Beulah” means “married”.

“... For the LORD delights in you,  
And to Him your land will be married.

(Isaiah 62:5) For as a young man marries a virgin,  
So your sons will marry you...”

Why does it use “young man”? Think about it. Is there anybody more passionate than a young man? I mean, you get old and you get married again, you go, “Okay.” A woman gets married in her old age, she goes, “Oh, security. Retirement.” I know that's not always true. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. Young men have passion. Let's just leave it there.

“For as a young man marries a virgin,  
So your sons will marry you;  
And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
So your God will rejoice over you.”

He's trying to put us in the context of the fervor and the passion. So, He uses the “young man” and He puts it in the relationship and He goes, “You know how the guy's going, ‘I can hardly wait to get married’? That's the way I rejoice over you. That's the way I feel over you.” And so, you see that at the beginning of this particular passage.

Now, the problem is, if you go back to Revelation 12, it says in verse 2,

(Revelation 12:2) “And she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.”

“*Basanizō*” is the word that He uses for “pain” there in the text, making reference to great torture and torment. It's a word that's oftentimes used when the torturers would come in, as Jesus uses it in Matthew 18, and begin to torture you. The soldiers would come in and torture their people that they were trying to get information out of. So, the text is making reference to a great travailing, specifically the labor that's being mentioned in verse 2, a great travailing and anguish is now almost torturous. The text is telling us something, and the passage is telling us that this child is not coming easy.

And if you go all the way back, once again, you see the initial cry in Isaiah 54, in which God says, “Shout for joy, because we're going to have a kid.”

But His statement is,

(Isaiah 54:1) "Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child;

Break forth into joyful shouting..."

"The day is coming," and He begins to describe, "Get everything ready, because the kid's coming. The kid's coming. Hope is coming. It's on its way."

Now, if you back up a little bit further and go to Isaiah 26, and we read some of these last week, but if you look with me in Isaiah 26, you begin to see that the land had been in distress; in particular, the city of Jerusalem had been in distress. He tells them, "Look, don't depend on man to be your strong city. You have a strong city. I'm the strong city. I'm your protector."

(Isaiah 26:1) "In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

"We have a strong city;

He sets up walls and ramparts for security.

(Isaiah 26:2) Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter,

The one that remains faithful.

(Isaiah 26:3) The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace,

Because he trusts in You.”

Well, you know the passage.

It goes on and says in the passage,

(Isaiah 26:9) “At night my soul longs for You,  
Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently...”

Now, what we also understand is this, that no matter what you do to the wicked, they don't respond well.

And so, His statement is in verse 10,

(Isaiah 26:10) “Though the wicked is shown favor,  
He does not learn righteousness;  
He deals unjustly in the land of uprightness,  
And does not perceive the majesty of the LORD.”

But the heart that is righteous is longing for God and has this desire for the Lord. So, the zeal of the people is, “You've got to come. You've got to come.” Well, the point of the passage is that they seek the Lord, but things aren't happening. They're not able to get right. They're not able

to produce righteousness. They're not able to produce a Messiah.

And the statement is in verse 16,

(Isaiah 26:16) "O LORD, they sought You in distress; They could only whisper a prayer..."

You can almost feel that they've almost lost all of their life; it's being spent.

"... Your chastening was upon them."

Verse 17, how does it describe them?

(Isaiah 26:17) "As the pregnant woman approaches the time to give birth,

She writhes and cries out in her labor pains,  
Thus were we before You, O LORD.

(Isaiah 26:18) We were pregnant, we writhed in labor,  
We gave birth, as it seems, only to wind.

We could not accomplish..."

What? What is it we're trying to give birth to?

"... We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth..."

We couldn't do it.

But the declaration of verse 19 is,

(Isaiah 26:19) “Your dead will live...”

“In death, I'll bring forth life.” Now, to me, the interesting picture is that what the text is doing is it's giving you, if you follow the lineage and you follow the children of Israel; from day one, if you go all the way back to Eve, you'll see that God turns to Eve and He goes, “Yes, you have sinned. So, here's the deal. You were willing to suffer for doing wrong. You must be willing to suffer to bring forth salvation. So, in pain, you'll bring forth a child. But this child will crush the head of the one that came between you and God, and victory will be wrought.” I mean, this is the first woman, nobody's ever gone through this before. Eve is willing to go through pain and suffering, to have a Messiah. And of course, they named their first child “the gotten one.” He's the one. He's the gotten one. Of course, Cain was anything but the gotten one. But the desire was there, and the heart was there. But as you go through, what's interesting is that, well, you don't need to turn there, but if you were to turn to Matthew 1, it gives a list of the genealogy of Jesus, right?

Okay, here's what's very unique about Matthew 1. It lists 5 women. Genealogies don't have women in them, but Matthew lists 5 women. And here's the women that he lists. You can read it in Matthew or just listen to me. The first is Tamar. Tamar was the one that was rejected by the sons of Judah. Rejected. And the picture is that the Messiah is going to come out of rejection; that salvation is going to come. Now, if you understand, you read Isaiah 53, it'll declare Christ despised and rejected by men. And so, the birth of the Messiah is going to come out of rejection. If you look at the next woman, it's Rahab. Despised. Why? She's a harlot. There's no reason why good should come out of this woman. But the Messiah lineage will come out of Rahab the harlot because she surrendered her life and came over and gave her life. And she will become a part of that lineage to be a part of the people of God. That's an interesting picture, don't you think? So, it would not only be Tamar who was rejected and Rahab who was despised, but Ruth who would come out of, well, she's a Moabite, first of all, not even a Jew. But she married a Jew. And then her husband dies. And then she's stuck with a mother-in-law that is very bitter.

“Oh, let's call you by your name.” And she says, “No, don't do that. Call me Mary, because I am very bitter.” And it will be out of bitterness that the lineage will go on. I mean, when you consider the things that can happen to us, and in particular as you look at Ruth, the bitter loss of her husband, the bitter loss of Naomi's husband, the bitter sorrow that was involved in that, and of course, all the wrong turns and the consequences that are coming from that, and the disappointments that you have to deal with, can salvation come out of that? And God says, “That's part of the labor, because I'm going to bring salvation out of rejection, out of people being despised.” Jesus will come on the scene, “All who are weary and heavy laden, come, I will give you rest, because that's where birth comes from.” It's when you come on your knees and you say, I have no hope, and you're just about to breathe your last, you could barely bring it out, and you go, “You're going to have to do this.” I mean, there's something about this whole process of labor that brings us to the ultimate conclusion, “You've got to do this.” And what's very interesting on the 4th woman that is mentioned within the text is, well, it doesn't name her.

Now, we know her name. Her name is Bathsheba. It does not name her. It says, “Uriah's wife.” Did you notice that? So, in the lineage, what do you think it's talking about? Well, what it's talking about is the abuse of power and oppression; David using his power and the abuse. I mean, how many people have had to deal with abuse of power and the oppression of others? God says, “I'll save out of that. I'll use that to save you.” It'll be part of childbirth. It'll be part of salvation coming out, through all these difficulties. And of course, Mary is the last one that's mentioned, and her name itself means “bitter”. And God will bring such a marvelous hope out of this. Well, the text is revealing to us that there is a difficulty in bringing birth. And that's the purpose of Revelation 12:2. She was in pain. She was writhing in pain. How is this going to happen? And God says, “It's going to happen. But it's not going to come easy. The child's not going to come easy.”

If you look in Chapter 12 and verse 3, it says,

(Revelation 12:3) “Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon...”

Now, I love contrast and comparison. I suppose if any of you have done inductive Bible study, you enjoy doing that, too. But the interesting contrast of this verse in contrast with the first verse, and I just want you to see it. Sometimes it's a little nuanced, just like a jot and a tittle that might make a big difference.

But if you look at the very beginning of Chapter 12, verse 1, it says,

(Revelation 12:1) “A great sign...”

You see that? And then it talks about the woman.

If you look at verse 3,

(Revelation 12:3) “Then another sign...”

Why didn't it call it a “great sign”? It's not a great sign. It's another sign.

Now, watch.

“... behold, a great red dragon...”

So, the way that Scripture is doing this is it's saying, “There's something that is great and powerful, but I don't perceive it as significant.” It's a very interesting point that God is making. The woman was not great. It doesn't say,

“the great woman.” Of course, God says to Israel, “I didn't choose you because you're the greatest. You were the smallest. You're the most insignificant. I chose you because I set My love on you and I made a promise to your dad.” So, at the heart of the heavens and the ark is the promise of God. And that's what's in that coffin. “I said I was going to give you life. I said I was going to sustain you. I said I was going to resurrect you. I said I was going to lead you in the way. By george, I'm going to do it. Not by your strength, because you're not able to give birth, but by a miraculous birth, I'll bring forth a child.” And you'll go, “Wow, He must really love me.”

Now, the passage begins to describe this other sign that appeared in heaven, if you look at the phrase,

“... behold, a great...”

“*Megas*,” making reference to the fact of dimension; it makes reference to the fact of mass; it makes reference to the fact of power, that this dragon is great. And the text is actually making reference to the fact that you need to look at this thing. When something huge, cataclysmic happens, something powerful, something that just takes

your breath away, you have to look at it. And what's interesting is “*drakōn*,” the word that is used for dragon here, actually comes from the root word meaning to look or to stare. The power of this being is so infective that you can't help but look at it. He immediately demands your attention by virtue of his great strength. He is a red dragon, “*pyrros*” is where we get the word “pyromaniac,” fire, that's flaming. So, you have this flaming, of course, the words, if you've ever heard about cherubim and seraphim, “seraphim” means “flaming ones.” So, you can see them in Ezekiel 1 in particular, flaming and dashing like lightning bolts. And you can imagine this flaming mega force that you can't take your eyes off the grandeur. Ezekiel tells us that he was perfection in beauty. So, everything about him was on the grandest of scales.

The text reads,

“Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon (this great flaming thing that you have to look at) having seven heads...”

Now, you wouldn't think that 7 heads would be on a dragon. Maybe 6, but not 7. The emphasis is that he was

perfect as a created being and perfect in his authority; more specifically, he had the highest of authority and reigned supreme. In fact, Ezekiel tells us that he was in the very presence of God, that he was the greatest of all beings. So, you have this created being perfect in position, in power. You have this created being with 10 horns. “10,” making reference to fullness of power and superior in strength. Is there anybody stronger? No, there's nobody stronger. Now, we're talking about in the realm of created beings. Obviously, God is superior to all. But in the realm of superior beings, there was nobody greater than he was.

“... and on his heads were seven diadems.”

Which makes reference to control and specifically control of the earth. “7,” making reference to the fact that he had complete control of the earth.

1 John 5:19 reads this way,

“... the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

That's a complete power.

Now, what does he have complete power over? Well, he has complete power over everything that's earthly, everything that's temporary, everything that's corruptible, and everything that's perishable. But he has complete power over that. And you wonder why things are messed up? Prince of the power of the air is in control, and you wonder why things are messed up? Who gave him the keys? We did in the garden. So, you can only blame us. But the passage makes reference of this great power.

And then in verse 4,

(Revelation 12:4) “And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour (Literally consume and swallow) her child.”

Now, the purpose of the picture is to demonstrate the passion of God. Why are lightning bolts, fire, steaming from the coffin? God feels passionate about the woman. He feels passionate about the child. If you were a father, how would you feel about something coming to attack your wife while she's giving birth? How would you feel? I

mean, if you're not feeling this, then you're not understanding what the passage is trying to reveal to you. We read about the wrath of God. "Why is God so angry?" You tell me. God wants you to be with Him. His heart is in that treasure chest that He wants you to have this relationship with Him, and there's somebody that wants to separate that from you. Now, how intensely do you think He feels about this?

Isaiah 26, if you go back there to that particular passage, it says in Isaiah 26, of course, we understand that a woman could not bring forth that deliverance to the earth, but then God turns to the woman and He says in verse 20,

(Isaiah 26:20) "Come, my people, enter into your rooms  
And close your doors behind you;  
Hide for a little while  
Until indignation runs its course.

(Isaiah 26:21) For behold, the LORD is about to come out  
from His place

To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;

And the earth will reveal her bloodshed

And will no longer cover her slain.”

Now, look at Revelation 27:1, and tell me that this isn't parallel to Revelation.

“In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan...”

“*Drakōn*,” the great serpent of old; literally described in many references as “the great twisted serpent.”

I'll throw this in, about 800 years before Christ was born, there were a lot of myths coming out of Greece. And in particular, Homer writes his Iliad and many of those other things. One of the interesting stories was a story of, and I'm not going to mention the names because I really don't want to necessarily encourage you to go into mythology, but a young man and a woman, they were like gods. And the farmers in this particular region were upset because a famine had come in their land. So, they wanted a sacrifice, and they were going to take these two young people that were gods and put them on the altar and sacrifice so that they could have good crops and have a successful year. The story goes that a ram kind of came out of nowhere, like a flying ram, and it had golden fleece.

And the golden-fleeced ram came and rescued them, actually rescued them. Later on, these two young people, to gain favor with the gods that they worshipped, took the ram and sacrificed the ram as unto their gods. And that was the ram that saved them. But they sacrificed the ram, then it was realized that this ram was still a powerful force. And so, they took the fleece of the ram and they hung it on a tree in what they called the holy grove. So, they put this golden fleece there and if somebody was able to attain the golden fleece, they would have power and saving power. The only problem is that there was a multi-headed dragon that was there to guard and to keep people from the fleece, and his name was "*drakōn*".

Now, the reason I bring it up is not necessarily to acquaint you with Greek mythology, but the reason I bring that up is that God, through all sorts of venues has been demonstrating to man what has to take place. And if you understand, God in this particular text in Revelation is talking largely to Greeks. This is Asia Minor and everything's become Hellenized. Everything is pretty much Greek even within this realm. So, as He's talking to

these seven churches, they're very much aware of *drakōn*. And they're very much aware of that path mythology. And God is bringing them into the reality of what really is happening. Man knows what's right and he knows what's wrong; he knows that you don't sacrifice something for your own benefit, but that "Maybe there is a power that can save me." And that man has a tendency to look for those things. And we also know there's this force, there's something inside of us that's going, "There's some force trying to keep me from this salvation." So, God paints this interesting picture in Revelation, and He says, "There is. Yeah. You want to know the reason you're thinking this? Because it's true." And of course, Job mentions about Leviathan, Isaiah will mention about Leviathan, Psalm will mention about Leviathan the great. The point is that there's force. And the interesting picture that you have is that he violently takes with him a third of the heavens with him. And what's interesting about that is he does it how, if you remember reading? With his tail, right? The reason why that's interesting is that first of all, we have a great power that everybody's looking at because of his power, because of his strength. But not only that, the way

that he brings people with him, and here's the point of the tail, is by using the lesser things to draw them away. When it says he swept them away from heaven, it can mean violent or it can mean a drawing. And the point was that he was taking powers that were lesser powers, but he was going to use that as an emphasis or that which would be elevated in the earth. If I can put it more specifically, he is moving people away by virtue of using lesser values to do that.

Here's an example. People are oftentimes drawn away from God by virtue of appearance. Paul will even say to the Corinthians, "You follow because of appearance." Now, is appearance in and of itself a bad thing? I mean, the appearance of the garden, the appearance of the tree that was so alluring to Eve, was the appearance the bad thing? The wonderful appearance of glory is going to be in heaven, but glory of the appearance cannot be on the throne. It's a lesser value. It's not the most important thing. The greatest thing about this being, which we ultimately call Lucifer because of his light, was that he was perfect in beauty. Ezekiel tells us that. There wasn't

anybody more grand in beauty than he was. But beauty can't be the head; it can only be the tail. And if, in fact, you're drawn by the lesser things, you're being led by the tail of the world.

Isaiah 14 talks about Satan in particular, and how he drew people away with, it's going to surprise you, music. I often tell people music's a wonderful thing, but music can't take precedence over heart. It just can't. It was never meant to. Is music bad? No. But it can be used to draw people away inappropriately, stir them up, and move them. Look, if we have to beat up the music to get you to worship God, that's not worship. That's you just bee-bopping. And you can do that in some bar. But it's not that music is a bad thing. But it literally says whether it's Isaiah 14 or Revelation 18, that the music that Satan uses will stop. He'll stop alluring people this way. I've often said that a number of years ago, we had a drug addict who was heavily involved in crack. And he said, "Pastor Gary," he says, "I can always tell when they're selling crack in the neighborhood." And I said, "How can you tell?" He says, "They're playing certain music." He says, "There's certain

music that they play.” He says, “You can hear.” He says, “I know that's somebody selling crack.” So, the world is using music to allure. The same thing is true with law and legalities and things like that.

Just to close with this, but if you look with me at Matthew 23:23, it says this,

(Matthew 23:23) “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe...”

Now, we're talking about law.

“... you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness...”

That's an interesting example of how legalism will oftentimes emphasize the lesser things and put them out in front so that it wasn't that the things in heaven were bad, but it was the lesser values that then were going to take prominence in the world and were going to be used by Satan to draw man away.

The point of the passage is to show us that there's a battle going on and it is personal with God. I know that

the world wants to say, “Nothing personal, I just don't believe in Jesus.” God goes, “I take it personally. I take it personally. Because if you're not for Me, you're trying to kill My Son. You're against Me. And that's very personal.” And God wants the church to see, things are being used by forces to lure us away from what is paramount, and that is the child, the one who comes to save. And boy, I see it infiltrating church, don't you? All those lesser things, because the one problem about it is you can't say, “Well, they're wrong,” because they're not. They're not wrong. But what makes them wrong is that you make them a priority. And soon people will be allured away from the Son. And it's all part of the dragon's ability to not only allure us away from the Son, but to snuff out the saving of the Son. So, does God have a good reason to be upset?

## **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we thank You again for Your word, and once again, the reminder of these things that we grow complacent about, and we don't feel passionate about.

I'm just so sorry that I don't feel as intensely as You do, but Lord, stir my heart that I might say, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Stir within this church; make us a fire, shooting out of the coffin, declaring, "Mercy is what's on God's heart."