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Revelation

Chapter 12 - Revealing Why God is so Passionate

The Devil Bitterly Craving Vengeance (vs. 7-12)

Revelation 12:7-12: And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “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 brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, O

heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.”

We find ourselves in Revelation 12. One of the benefits of going from one chapter to the next chapter, one verse to the next verse, is that you don't get to pick and choose what you want to preach about; that oftentimes the very passages that we would tend to avoid are the ones that we need the most. Interesting, isn't it? All Scripture is inspired by God, and all Scripture is profitable for correction, for reproof, for training in righteousness, and it is necessary to make us adequate and complete for every good work. So, this is a necessary passage for us.

And as we come to this passage, it is also good to remember that this letter, the Book of Revelation, “*apokaluptos*,” the unveiling, was written to the churches. So, it is very pertinent to us; it's very applicable to us. The important thing is then to find out what is the application,

what is it that God is trying to tell us? Because He clearly is longing to tell us something.

I often remember wrestling with that concept when I was younger, “Why didn't He tell me really clearly?” But then I read Proverbs 2, and I said, “I get it.” Because Proverbs 2 says, unless you're really hungry, unless you're really looking for it like you would for silver or gold, He's not going to give it to you. The desire makes all the difference in the world. Because let's say that He just gives it to you just because you want some information. Will you change because of that? Probably not. Because you didn't work for it, you didn't desire it, you didn't crave for it, you're not going to change; your life isn't going to be any different. Now, what's going to happen? You're going to be held more responsible for the things that He told you to do. And now that you know what the right thing to do is, you're going to reject that. So, it really is the grace of God. And really, as you see Christ talking to the multitudes in parables, He was telling them stories. And He says, “Okay, we'll tell you stories. When you want to know what the story means, talk to Me about it and I'll let

you know.” And of course, that's what He does with the disciples. He begins to explain to them the parables. They say, “Tell us what these parables mean.” So, when we come to this particular book, there are a lot of hidden treasures. You have to be searching. The other benefit is to know all of Scripture. It's inappropriate to take one book or one chapter or one verse and isolate it from the whole word of God. When you do that, you misunderstand and you misinterpret what He's saying. So, context within the text as well as within the whole book is that which brings depth and understanding of the passage.

So, when we come to Revelation 12, it's important to understand that this is a part of a whole. It's not an isolated incident. It's not something that is unique to the way that God thinks, because we know that God is immutable. That means He never changes. So, there's nothing new here. But what it is revealing to us is the heart and the Spirit of God. And one of the things that I have always longed for is to know Him more. How does God think? And how does He view us? How does God

view us? Well, if you listen to most people and you listen to commentaries or you listen to individuals that are bent on just pointing the finger at people, you would almost come away thinking that He's very crass or hard and harsh and hateful. None of that's true at all. It's not true at all. So, the misunderstanding of who He is oftentimes comes simply because people twist or distort what God has been saying to us all along. I think it's one of the reasons why I try to take a tremendous amount of time. I just want to get this right, because whatever God is telling us, He's telling us something very important, not only about us, but about who He is. And I have found that good theology really answers all my questions. If I understand who God really is, all my questions are answered. Bad theology will always put me in a tailspin. So, in many respects, when we come to Chapter 12, it is much about theology. It's about who God is. And He is describing Himself to us through a story.

Now, once again, I want to remind you, as we go through the Book of Revelation, what He gives us are many pictures. And the reason that He gives us pictures is to stir

up our emotions so that we might feel as deeply about things as He does. So if, in fact, you were going to encourage somebody to give to somebody poor, if you started showing pictures of poor people, it would begin to stir up their emotions. If you wanted to stir up a sense of justice or righteousness, you would show pictures of somebody abusing somebody else, and there would be something that would cause you to feel that way. So, when you go through the book of Revelation, there are so many pictures. And at the very beginning of the book, you begin to realize that one of the grand pictures is that the church is to be like a light. Well, how would you demonstrate that? Well, you show them as candlesticks. And then you put stars over them, and you say, "You know, you're supposed to be lights in the world. That's why I called you." So, the uncomplicated nature of Revelation is something that I always want to encourage you to see, that God is demonstrating things to us so that there is clarity. It's a book that is called "Unveiling". So, obviously God's not trying to cover things up. He's trying to actually reveal things. If you and I will come in the Spirit

of Christ and see Him in the text, you begin to see, wow, this is just obvious. And we'll see that as we go.

As we come to Chapter 12, it's almost as if we have a break in the midst of all of the mayhem. And of course, one of the things that Revelation has been revealing to us is just how horrific and hateful the world is. God is pulling apart the covers and He goes, "See, this is what you're trusting in." And He's telling the churches, "You don't want to let them in your door. You don't want to let the world in your door because it's very selfish, very demanding, it's very political. There's 1000 and one things. They're very greedy. So, you don't want to let them in your door because once you begin to let them in....," and some of the churches have been doing that. The church at Ephesus had become legalistic and they had been letting some of those things in. You know how the world likes to point their fingers at you and tell you how bad you are and everything like that? So, the church at Ephesus let that come into the door. The same thing is true with the Church of Laodicea, who had allowed the whole concept of, "If we have enough money and our

buildings are big enough, then we can save the world. We don't even need God.” And there's this whole perception that you can do this.

But there was another church, as He lists the seven churches at the beginning of the Book of Revelation, that was going through a very difficult time. And specifically, that church was Smyrna. And Smyrna, as we understand, was a church that was undergoing not only a tremendous amount of pressure, but they were going to be facing death shortly.

If you look with me at the beginning, if you go all the way back to Revelation 2, and if you'd pick up with me as He describes this particular church, the church of Smyrna, read with me in verse 8.

It says this,

(Revelation 2:8) “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:”

That's a great title, isn't it? You can't help but think of John 11 when you think of Christ and the resurrection. He

turns to Martha and He goes, “He'll live again.” She goes, “I know someday.” He goes, “Martha, I'm the Resurrection and the Life. If you die, you'll live again. Do you believe this?” So, He gives that wonderful title within the passage.

And it says this,

(Revelation 2:9) “I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

Now, the word Satan has been given to them, and it's interesting that “devil” is an adjective, but “Satan” is a noun, which means that it's actually a name that has been given to him. And that name is “adversary”. More specifically, against God, against the things of God. It's a perfect name for him because he is against saving. He is against grace. He is against mercy. We're going to see about that a little bit, hopefully as we go through the passage, because a lot is written about him in just this one small text in Revelation 12.

But if you look here, it says, “I know your tribulation and I know you're being hounded and I know that the adversary who's against you is coming upon you pretty heavily.”

(Revelation 2:10) “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil...”

That is to say the slanderer, He gives this adjective,

“... is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days...”

“Be faithful until I get you out of prison.” No, that's not what the text says, is it?

It says,

“... Be faithful until death...”

“You're going to die.”

“... and I will give you the crown of life.”

Paul makes mention of that particular crown in 2 Timothy 4. And the way he puts it is, “All who have loved His appearing will receive the crown of life.” So, that faithfulness is directly attached to the longing for Christ.

But it goes on and says,

(Revelation 2:11) “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.”

It's interesting that His statement is, “And you will have tribulation 10 days, and then you'll die.” Now, if you read that, you walk away and you go, “Okay, that's not really hopeful.” But we live seeing different things. And we actually believe, I actually believe in the resurrection. I believe that even though I die, I'm going to live again. And not only is my spirit going to live, but Scripture tells me when I die right now, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, so my spirit's with Him. But Scripture also says the day is coming when the dead in Christ will raise. That means that He's going to raise up my body. Just like Jesus, His body was resurrected; my body is going to be resurrected. Because we were always meant to be a body. And I look forward to the day I get to hug my brother again. So, that's hope, the peace, and the joy that we have. It's not over for us. When this time is done, I'm just beginning my life. I'm beginning my forever

life. And wow, we have a lot to look forward to.

Resurrection, “I am the resurrection and the life.” I like the fact that He uses the word “resurrection”. I mean, He could just say, “Oh, we'll just make you new; you'll be a new person.” I don't want to be with somebody new. I want to be with people I love. So, I'm looking forward to that day.

Jesus is revealing these wonderful truths to us, and the Church of Smyrna needs to hear this, because the Church is undergoing attacks by those that are adversarial against them, and there's a force behind it. There's an evil force behind it that wants to condemn and wants to destroy. It is that picture that we have in Revelation 12, and one of the reasons why this picture is given in Revelation 12 is to encourage the church, and especially the church that's going through times of hostility and hatred and the accusations that are coming against them, “You're not doing this right, you're not doing that right.” The bottom line is that there's a lot you could find wrong with me. I mean, the Bible is very clear. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. There's none righteous, no, not one.

So, there's a lot to accuse me of. And the same is true with all of us. We're not different because we're perfect. We're different because we're forgiven. And it's the grace of God that's upon us and His mercy is upon us. And we receive the gift. You can receive the gift too and be forgiven as well. It's a wonderful truth about that.

Now, in this particular passage, what He does is He gives us this picture. And it's a picture of a woman. And the picture of the woman, it's like she's surrounded by the sun, and it's like the moon is a crown, and she has these 12 diadems on her head, and she's beloved. Without me going through the whole chapter again, the pictures that are given are pictures that are really conveying to us God's heart. And if you miss that, you miss the whole text. What God is wanting to reveal to you is that God longs to be gracious. I mean, why would He depict His people, Israel, that's what He's doing within the text, i.e. the 12 diadems, as a woman? Unless the whole reason that He created this whole thing of relationship at the very beginning... I mean, I oftentimes comment, you go back to Genesis, Scripture says, well, God has Adam, "Okay, now

start naming the animals.” and so, he's working. And you're looking and there's a mate for this one, there's a mate for this one, there's a mate for this one. Adam still doesn't get it. And God goes, “Okay, it's not good for you to be alone. Have you noticed that all the animals have somebody, but you don't?” So, I'm not saying he's the fastest learner. But the point is that it's God's idea. Relationship is God's idea. This is not something that we invented up, “Hey, we know how to get along with people a lot better than God does.” That's not true. God invented it. And God is the one that wanted relationships. So, He builds this into us. And if a man is truly a man, he has a sense inside of him that he cherishes his wife. He loves her. And if he's really a man, according to Ephesians 5, he'd be willing to give his life for her. He'd be willing to die for her. Now, what woman wouldn't love a guy like that? But this is the picture of the heart of man. And God says, “That's My heart.” So, God is conveying through a venue that we know about that He created for us to realize. And He says, “This is how I feel about you.” You say, “Well, how much do You love me?” He says, “I give you the sun. I give you the moon. I give you everything.”

So that when you read a passage like Isaiah 30:18, what does it say? God longs to be gracious to you. So, what a great picture that is. "I'll give you anything, I'll give you everything." Now, here again, the world would set up, and of course, the serpent in the garden would say, "I think He's trying to cheat you." But He just created everything and it was good. And He placed you in the grandest part of all of creation. And then the serpent says, "I think He's trying to cheat you." How could you say that? But it's the way the world comes off. "Oh, you're going to church. Oh, God's just trying to cheat you." He's not trying to cheat you. He's trying to tell you how much He loves you. So that when you see this woman that is lovingly cared for, then you see the next stage of that in which you have this child sorely longed for. God is stirring up, once again, emotions. For instance, with Sarah in the Bible, in Scripture, you go with Abraham and Sarah, and she's supposed to have a child in order for them to be the mother and father of a great nation. Of course, now in the 90s and Abraham, about 100 years old, I mean, odds are looking pretty slim. Not one child. Why wait so long? God then turns to Sarah, and He goes, "You're going to have a

child.” She starts laughing about it. He goes, “I heard you laugh.” She goes, “I was laughing inside; You couldn't hear me.” He says, “I heard you.” But you read of that and you begin to see that what was being created in the heart of Sarah was a longing. You give something to somebody immediately, they can't really fully appreciate it. But if they have to wait, when that child comes, man, that's the greatest child in the world. See? What is God telling you? I want to create a sense of longing. So, why was Jesus not born right after Adam? See? Well, all during the Old Testament, they were longing for the Messiah. But God says it's the longing that will encourage you to appreciate Him. And when you finally receive that wonderful gift, what a wonderful moment that is. You just embrace that moment.

So, the picture is given within the text. And then when you see that there's this beast that the woman is expecting, the picture is, I'm just going through the text, if you want to read it, fine. The woman's expecting, and then this beast is waiting for the child to be born so that he can devour the child. How are you feeling about that?

We've got to save the kid! When you think about the promise that was given to Eve, "Through you will come one that will crush the head of the serpent who has caused this division between you and God. The day is coming when the Messiah will come through you." And of course, she goes, "Oh, good." But her firstborn murders Abel. God in His grace raises up Seth, and said, "That'll be the promised seed." But all the way through, you begin to follow it. And what you begin to realize is all of the promised seed, somebody's trying to kill him. In almost every situation, whether it's, of course, Abraham makes his compromises, but Esau, the brother of Jacob, wants his brother dead, tries to kill him. Can't get to him. And then God in the meeting even holds him back. But he wanted his brother dead. But it was through Jacob that the promise of the Messiah was to come. So, all the way through, you see a dragon, so to speak. Pharaoh in Egypt wanted all the boys dead, right? Whether it be giants or kings or the Assyrians, if you read in Isaiah, the intent of Sennacherib was to literally wipe out the Jewish populace. His whole intent was to totally wipe them out. And God says, "This is what he intends. I will not let him do that."

And if you remember the particular scenario where he literally had Jerusalem surrounded, I mean, it was down to just little Jerusalem. And he had them surrounded and God overnight slays 185,000 of his men, they just die overnight. So, God was protecting them. I mean, Babylon comes in their destruction and how close the nations, the Medes and the Persians come in and you got this guy by the name of Haman whose sole plot was to kill all the Jews and could have easily had done it. And the wonderful Book of Esther, where God goes, "It's not going to happen." All the way through, you see, even when you consider Alexander the Great had come and conquered the world, and Antiochus Epiphanes was trying to slay all the Jews in that particular region, God would not let him do that. The dragon has been after the "Hope" of the people. So, at even the day in which Jesus was born, Herod slays all the children in Bethlehem, two years and younger, just to make sure that the Messiah would not be born. The dragon's always been after.

What's interesting is that "*drakōn*," the word that's actually used in the Greek, is the description of something

magnificent and powerful; so magnificent and powerful that you have to look at him. As we have mentioned, the reference to Satan in Ezekiel displays him as the greatest of creatures in the heavens, more perfect than any, grander than any, more glorious than any, and you can't take your eyes off him. That's actually what "*drakōn*" means, you can't take your eyes off him. His power and his majesty, by virtue of sheer force, was basically unmatched.

When we come to this passage, what's interesting about the passage is you see Michael and Satan warring in the passage. And for a long time, I always struggled with that, "Why doesn't God just beat him up?" But there's a reason for him. There's a reason for Satan. In Job 1, you see Satan come before God, and you go, "Okay, first of all, God, why are you letting him come up?" And once again, I emphasize, Satan has a purpose. I know that people say stuff like, "I had a waitress come by the other day and she had horns and a tail." But anyway, people have in their own mind who Satan is. Let me clarify to you. He's a perfect being, one of the reasons why he could be in

heaven, who is very well immersed in what is right and what is wrong. He is the greatest of lawyers. Now, to set you straight, he is a prosecuting attorney. He's a prosecuting attorney. But he has every right to be in the presence of God if in fact somebody does something wrong. He has every right to be there. So, as a prosecuting attorney, he's looking for ways to accuse and why Scripture calls him the accuser of the brethren. And so, in Job, of course, God declares Job's the most righteous man on the face of the earth; to a prosecuting attorney, this is his greatest case. "If I can show you this guy is bad, I've got everybody out." I mean, you get the most righteous guy on the face of the earth and you can show that he's bad, you've won your case. So, he comes before God, and he goes, "Okay, I know Job is like a righteous guy when everything's going well, but start taking stuff away and see what happens." And God says, "Do it." Now, your first thought is, "Okay, God's taking the bait and He's being manipulated by Satan." That's not true. Satan's being manipulated by God. Because let me tell you something. Job had a problem. And Job's problem was he believed he was righteous. And he believed he

was righteous enough to get to heaven. What God is doing is he's saving him. He's using this powerful force of this attorney to show he's not all, that he's not as righteous as he is. Scripture says, none righteous, no, not one, right? As righteous as he is, he could never get into heaven by his righteousness, but Job thinks he can. Now, Job, on a normal day, wouldn't tell you that. But you start taking stuff away from him, and he's going to talk. And so, he starts singing. And as you go through the book, he goes, "Look, I've done this, I've done this, I've done this, I've done this, I've done this. How can You say I'm not good?" And the testing of him begins to reveal that Job really thinks he's good enough to get into heaven. In fact, he thinks he's so good that He says, "If you just give me a moment talking to God, I think I can straighten Him out." And God gives him that moment, if you remember. But when God finally gives him the moment, what does Job do? He goes, "I had no idea who You were." Puts his hand over his mouth. Wow. You know what God just did? He just saved Job. Now, Satan was thinking, "I'm pulling one over. I'm going to show this." God says, "I already know that they're sinners, but I'm going to rescue them. They're

going to put their trust in Me, and they're going to believe that I'm the merciful One. And it's through My mercy that I'm going to rescue them. In fact, the price is going to be paid for their sins, and I'm going to do it." We never figured that.

And the same picture is given, and you just need to turn, and I know I'm going into a lot of background, but it's necessary for you to understand the text. If you look with me in Zechariah 3, once again, another familiar passage that we oftentimes pull out. It's in a setting in which both Joshua and Zerubbabel are feeling down, and we kind of understand what the problem is because they have sin. You know, when you have sin in your life, you're not going to feel confident. And if there are things in your life that you know you're doing are wrong, you're not going to feel emboldened to even proclaim anything about God. So, the high priest, in this particular text, his name was Joshua. Great name because it makes reference to what? Jehovah Saves. So, here he is, the high priest, and he's got a problem. What's the problem? He's got sin in his life. So, you get a high priest and his garments are filthy. You can't

go into the presence of God. You can't go into the Holy of Holies.

The scene is this, if you look with me in Zechariah 3:1,

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.”

Now, it's not really clear in the text whose right hand he's standing next to, but I personally believe it's God's. And this is the reason why I believe it's true. Because the fact is that he's standing, he's not sitting, which means it's not the place where he's going to remain. But it is a place at this time that he has authority. Now the question is, what authority does he have? And the authority is right and wrong. He has the authority of the law. So, if Joshua has sinned, guess what? He can be accused. So, have you sinned? Okay, you can be accused. You guys are in trouble. “Not me.” All right, that was another one for me. So, then I'm in more trouble now because I just lied, but anyway.

(Zechariah 3:2) “The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen

Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

(Zechariah 3:3) Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel."

What do you say? You stand there filthy. What do you say? You can't defend yourself. "I'm not dirty." You can't say that.

(Zechariah 3:4) "He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal (celebration) robes."

Look, there's something in all of us, a sense of right and wrong. In the Old Testament, King David, had this very strong sense of what was right and what was wrong. And in fact, if you did the wrong thing and he felt impassioned enough about it, he'd just kill you. Not a big discussion. You're just dead. But David also had within him a sense of, "But I love them." And so, when his son, Absalom, does these horrific things by killing his brother, and it's a vengeful act, and some may even say, legitimately so. But

it was a vengeful act, and he kills his own brother, and then, as time goes on, he wants to kill his dad. He wants to kill David. Joab, David's general, says, "Let's just kill him. Let's just kill your son." David goes, "I can't do that. Look, go get him, don't kill him." Joab goes out, and kills him. He can't not kill him, because that's what he wants to do. And of course, when David finally comes to the end of his life, he turns to his son Solomon, and he says, "Look, don't let Joab go down to the grave peacefully. Kill him, because he's done all these things." But the fact is that there was a battle warring inside of David. And it's true with all of you. God has placed within our heart a conscience, a sense of right and wrong. And that's not right. That's not right. And before long, you're very upset about it. It's not right. Now, if somebody does something wrong that is just a horrific thing, you may have a thought, "Let's just get rid of them." Right? But if it's a family member, you go, "Okay, maybe we can just turn the other way." I mean, if we give you the knife, "You kill him." You can't do it. There's just something inside of you that can't.

Satan represents that sense of right and wrong, and condemnation. Do you deserve condemnation?

Absolutely. You deserve it. You're filthy, you're dirty, you've messed up. But what rules? Does God have a strong sense of right and wrong? Yes, that's why it can be in heaven. But what rules heaven? What rules His decisions? Well, Scripture will tell us that grace and mercy will reign over condemnation.

Now, what's interesting about the play here is that in the Old Testament, and I won't go into all the texts because I'm running out of time as it is, but if you look at Daniel 10, you have Michael warring with the forces of Persia and there are angelic forces fighting. Nobody's winning. It's a standstill. And it says within that particular text, "Michael is the guardian of your people." Talking to Daniel and the children of Israel. Then in Daniel 12:1, "Michael, the guardian of your people." He's there to protect. What is Michael doing? Michael's job is to present a stay of execution. Period. Michael was never meant to win. His position is never meant to win. It's to hold back the forces of condemnation until the champion

arrives. And when Christ arrives, then we win. But there was no way that God was going to allow brute force to reign in heaven. So, for instance, if Michael did beat up the dragon, so to speak, then how did he win? Through force. What would reign in heaven? Force. God was not going to let that reign in heaven. What is He going to have reign in heaven? Mercy, grace, the love of God. So, the battle was there.

If you look with me in Revelation 12, it says,

(Revelation 12:7) “And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon...”

And once again, stirring up in our heart, this dragon is out to get us. Obviously, an enemy, an adversary.

“... The dragon and his angels waged war,

(Revelation 12:8) and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.”

Really, this is kind of a synopsis of the whole span of all of Scripture, this little Chapter 12. But what Scripture is doing for us is telling us that he had a place at one time, but he wasn't allowed to sit. He could stand. Law had a

place. In many respects, Paul will use this argument in the Book of Romans. He says, "Law has a place." In Galatians, he'll say, "Law is a tutor to lead us to Christ." In other words, the purpose of the Law, as Paul will state in Romans, is to show that we're very sinful. Here's the point. Most people, they live their life, they suppress their conscience; after a while they go, "I'm not really doing anything wrong." Think of it this way, you're driving a car, "I'm going 85 and it's 55 miles in the speed zone, I'm not really doing anything wrong." Until the police car pulls up and I go, "Oh..." Now, this didn't happen to me. "Oh, I'm doing something wrong." What the law does is it says you're doing something wrong. But we grow complacent about these things. I'm hurting people by not being faithful. "Oh, I'm not really doing anything wrong." But then the consequences of those sins come out, and you go, "I really am hurting people." So, there's a benefit to those things. The consequences, the pain, the condemnation, there's a benefit to this. But it could never really change you. And God says, "I know what will change you. When you see how much I love you. When you see that I'm willing to take your sins on Me."

Hebrews 12 says that we have this One that has endured all things for us. And guess what He's doing? He's seated at the right hand of the Father. Now, what that's telling us is grace and mercy have won and that now we can win. So, there's no longer a place for the accusations.

Romans 8:1 will tell us, "There's therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." So, He just completely eradicates it. And now, Satan has no place. Where does he have to go? Well, he goes on the earth wreaking havoc. So, you want to know why everything's so confusing and so hostile. And clearly, one of his main vendettas is to destroy God's people, Israel, specifically because they were the ones that gave birth to the Messiah. And so, how has that worked its way through? Well, let's see. In 70 AD, Jerusalem was completely destroyed by the Romans. But as you go through, not only has it been by virtue of the Islamic attacks, the Palestinians, but six million Jews were slaughtered by Hitler. I mean, the dragon is going after them with a fervor. There's an anger and hostility. But with believers, there's therefore now, what? No

condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. So, there's no place for him in the heavens to condemn you. We stand clean before God.

I'm going to have to pick up next week. But if you look in Hebrews 12, I just want to show you that grand and glorious picture.

It says,

(Hebrews 12:1) “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

(Hebrews 12:2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame...”

“Thinking nothing of the shame” is actually what that phrase means.

“... and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

There's no more room for the accuser. He sat down. He can't stand at the right hand of God.

So, when you look at the end of chapter 9 of Hebrews, it says,

(Hebrews 9:27) “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

(Hebrews 9:28) so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time...”

In other words, as King James puts it, without reference to sin. He's not even going to bring up your sin. That's pretty cool, isn't it? That will come before Him.

So, if you look with me in Hebrews 4, since we're in the book of Hebrews.

(Hebrews 4:14) “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

(Hebrews 4:15) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

(Hebrews 4:16) Therefore let us draw near with confidence...

To what throne? The throne of accusations?

“... to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

In Revelation 12, and I'll close with this verse, and hopefully next week we'll be able to finish, but the promise is, if you look in Revelation 12:10, that the declaration is that salvation is now come and it's through Christ, right?

(Revelation 12:10) “... for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down...”

Now, who is that accuser of brethren?

Well, go back to verse 9.

(Revelation 12:9) “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old...”

“Archaios,” meaning from the original time. If you go back, okay, that was the guy in the garden. Okay, that's what that means.

“... the serpent of old who is called the devil...”

That is the slanderer; the one who slanders you.

“... and Satan...”

That is the adversary, who is against God, and, well, more specifically, he's against saving. He's all for the Law. Why is it Jesus was so hard on the Pharisees, Matthew 23? And why was He so easy on the woman caught in adultery? There's a woman caught in adultery, and they're saying, “We're supposed to get her, right?” He goes, “Okay, if you guys are without sin; you go ahead and stone her.” But how does He treat the Pharisees? “Woe to you Pharisees, hypocrites! You're tying heavy loads on people; you don't try to help them at all. You're accusers of the brethren. You say you're so righteous; you say you're so holy, and all you can do is suppress people and oppress them.” In fact, the only time that you really see Jesus angry is when He's in the temple and He's casting over the money changers and it's because they're taking advantage of people. I mean, we're all sinners. But the wonderful truth is that He came to save sinners. And Satan wants to throw out this whole concept of, “God's going to get you. God's going to get you.” And God says, “I'm trying to save you. I

think of you like a woman.” I mean, of all the terrible things that Israel did, of the rebellion against God, why would He still think of her like somebody He loves? What Scripture is telling us is God's fiercely loyal. He's deeply loving. He will not abandon you. “I will never leave you nor forsake you. A woman may forsake her children, but I will not. I'll inscribe you on the palm of my hands.” God has been so terribly misrepresented by virtue of the Law. And this is why the Book of Romans is so powerful because it takes us out of the realm of the Law, because God knew that once your heart was attuned to His, you wouldn't want to do the wrong thing anymore. If you really love somebody, you don't want to hurt them. You don't want to steal from them. You don't want to cheat. You're not envious of them. You're happy for them. If you just had the right heart, everything would change. And it's through Christ that you and I get the right heart. Lord willing, we'll finish the text next week.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your lovingkindness. Lord, it's new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness. And Lord, we read throughout Scripture, and we begin to realize just how convoluted and twisted the serpent has made things. He accuses people, and rightly so. We've messed up. We've sinned. We get it. But You saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done, but merely by Your mercy. And as powerful as Your desire was for right, there was something more powerful in heaven. It was the righteousness of mercy. We thank you so much for that. And it's because of that we come together as a church and we worship Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins and saved us, rescued us. Because of this, we can forever be with you, and death no longer has a hold on us. I mean, the wages of sin is death, but we're not even afraid of death. Because You're the Resurrection and the Life, and You did this all for us.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, if you've never received that wonderful gift where God so loved you that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but you could live forever with Him.

He's loved you this much all along. He's wanting to save you. All you have to do is receive that. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those that would just believe on His name.