

# A Mighty Fortress

by Paris Reidhead

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*The sermon explores the symbolism of the woman and the dragon in Revelation 12, highlighting the struggle between God's people and Satan, and the ultimate victory of Christ.*

**Duration:** 55:06

**Scripture:** Revelation 12:1, Revelation 12:7

**Topics:** "Protection"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the principles of the gospel and the progression of events described in the book of Revelation. He emphasizes that the purpose is not to set specific dates but to understand the principles and the encounter between the gospel and Satan. The speaker highlights the significance of Easter Sunday in relation to the chapter being discussed. He also shares a story of a man who witnessed the persecution of a hidden group in Russia, illustrating the protection and preservation of the church despite attempts to destroy it.

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## Transcript

Will you turn to number 33. I'm asking you to sing in just a moment, this great hymn by Martin Luther. You'll notice that the message this evening is the title of the song.

And as we study Revelation chapter 12 shortly, I'm sure you'll understand why I felt led to choose this song. But I would call to your attention, particularly the second and the third stanzas, notice them as I read them. Did we in our own strength, confide our striving would be losing.

We're not the right man on our side. The man of God's own choosing does ask who that may be. Christ Jesus.

It is he Lord savvy off his name from age to age the same. And he must win the battle. Well, it is finished.

We saw this morning. He has won. Then notice the victory of Luther's heart.

And though this world with devils failed, should threaten to undo us. We will not fear for God hath will his truth to triumph through us. The Prince of darkness grim.

We tremble not for him. His rage we can endure or low. His doom is sure.

One little word shall fell him. And this is the testimony of this man, Martin Luther, who had, I believe the vision that we shall see tonight, revelation 12, perhaps it wasn't in his mind as he wrote the hymn, but certainly the same truth is beautifully expressed. There.

Will you turn please to revelation chapter 12. I shall read the chapter. I trust you will follow and note it carefully.

May I say this to you that are joining us for the first occasion, revelation is the one book of the Bible attached to which is a promise of blessing for the reading our Lord has said that blessed are they that read, and I believe that this has been fulfilled abundantly in our hearts during the weeks we've studied it together now here carefully. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head, a crown of 12 stars, and she being with child cried prevailing in birth and pained to be delivered and there appeared another wonder in heaven and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and 10 horns and seven crowns upon his heads and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth and the dragon stood before the woman, which was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron and her child was caught up onto God and to his throne and the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of God that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days and there was war in heaven.

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon fought and his angels and prevailed not neither was their place found anymore in heaven and the great dragon was cast out an old serpent called the devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him and I heard a loud voice saying in heaven now is come salvation and strength in the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before God day and night and they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony and they love not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

And when the dragon saw that he was cast onto the earth he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child and to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness into her place where she is nourished for a time and times and a half time from the face of the serpent and the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood and the earth helped the woman and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth and the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. As you know through the centuries there have been a great many interpretations of the book of Revelation. There has been that group which have looked at the scripture historically trying to fit it to what has happened in the past.

There has been another company that has looked at it as all being in the future trying to establish a scheme of eschatology. And there is then another company which are simply trying to find in it the spiritual meaning that it has and the principles which are so clear and self-evident. I suppose in a sense we are not being held by loyalty to any of the three points of view but simply trying to find what this has.

I do not think that what we are saying is necessarily contradictory to any of the other points of view for certainly the scripture is capable of many different things being drawn from it like a mine. There are jewels to be found on every page and when you've gone over it once you can go right back over it. You never exhaust it.

But I am sharing with you through these studies that what we saw in the seven seals was the progress right on from that time that it was seen from the time of the early church with John unto the present. Not that they were opened in sequence necessarily but that they were the revelation of that which was transpiring the going forth of the word as we seem to view it through the white horse and the wars which have continued. Not that the word went forth and then wars began but simultaneously these moved on across the centuries.

When we saw the trumpets being sounded and viewed them as satanic delusions we realized that delusions began and have continued. There's been a sequence of satanic delusion and perhaps we're living in the time when it is more rampant than ever before. Certainly the fifth trumpet or the sixth trumpet rather had reference to the extending of these delusions and we might be well in the midst of that at this time.

And the seventh trumpet had reference to the consummation of all things. Perhaps this is the time but we are not here to set dates but rather to see principles and to see that wherever the gospel has been rejected there with nature's abhorrence of a vacuum God has enabled or permitted strong delusion to come from Satan that men rejecting the truth should believe a lie. And this has been the progress that we have seen as we've studied these various trumpets and the seals.

But now we come to something which is neither trumpet nor seal but carries in it the story of the gospel and the encounter with Satan and the ultimate victory of the Lord Jesus Christ in one chapter. And it is to my mind a delightful coincidence that it should have fallen on Easter Sunday. Let us notice now verse by verse this wonderful portion and notice the first verse there appeared a great wonder in heaven a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

She being with child trialed travailing in birth and pained to be delivered throughout all the Old Testament. God calls Israel his wife. He says that he's married to her that he has purchased or he's committed himself to or he's bound to her with a covenant of love.

And I would like to suggest to you that this woman that is seen here is that people of God that Ecclesia in the Old Testament that drawn out company that he called Israel his own people and that from way back in Genesis this this people called to himself where it was pregnant with the promise of the Redeemer for the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head and the promise began there. And then you recall how that it was through Noah that he gave the picture of salvation from wrath and by the marvelous illustration of Isaac's life that child born after due season when Abram was fast conceiving and Sarah was fast bearing God supernaturally quickened their bodies and gave Isaac testifying that God's seed should be called through the supernatural birth of the greater Isaac and then down to Moses and Israel drawn out and right on across the centuries. Every type is a type of Christ.

Every shadow foreshadows Christ. And throughout the Old Testament, here is this woman Israel prevailing. Then finally, the prophets, as they speak of of this one that is to come.

Isaiah, as he groans in agony at the sufferings of the Messiah and the prophecies concerning the woman that should bear the virgin that should should bring forth a son and unto us as a son is given unto us a child is born and the government shall be upon his shoulder and all through the Old Testament, this continuous testimony of Israel prevailing to be brought forth, paining to be delivered of this child of promise. But as we see this in the foreshadowing of Christ, John sees another picture, another another side of the same scene. And there appeared another wonder in heaven.

Behold, a great red dragon. Now, I do not believe that we have any zoological record of a dragon, whether it's a creature that's been conjured up by men trying to imagine all the ferocity and cruelty and power in a beast. But at any rate, it's it's the word that's used here.

I would submit to you that the dragon is is a type of Satan. And when we see him being cast out of heaven and his tail drawing the third part of the stars of heaven, may we go back to the Old Testament record, which tells us about Lucifer, the son of the morning, moved with envy, moved with pride, who decided that he would be like God and set his throne above the throne of God and in revolt made war against God. And our Lord Jesus said, I saw Satan cast out of heaven as lightning.

And this would tell us that a third part of the stars of heaven or the luminaries that served God, or can we say the angels that fell with with Lucifer, they were cast to the earth. I saw Satan fall as as lightning from heaven and to earth did he come. And here was he was he cast.

And notice that the record is that this dragon stood before the woman, which was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born, not just to devour her child. A careful reading of the Old Testament will show you that there was a satanic plot and scheme from the very earliest to destroy the line out of which Christ should come. You recall on one occasion there was just one one little child hidden in the temple and all of the line was exterminated.

But ultimately, that one child was brought and put on the throne and given rightful heritage. The line was preserved. And across the centuries, the dragon has done everything possible to destroy this child.

And of course, it brings its its really horrifying climax when you discover that the only ones that were prepared for the coming of Christ were the can I say the word pagan, the pagan religious leaders, followers of Zoroaster, perhaps, or from some of the other Oriental religions that had the Bible from the Jews being carried into dispersion and had read it and had learned about the woman to bring forth the child and seeing the sign in the heavens. These wise men came. Isn't it amazing? Have you ever stopped to think about this, that the woman represented by Israel had at this time lost all interest in the child that was to be born of her? They weren't looking, they weren't watching.

Oh, there was scheming and there was plotting and the part of the religious leaders to somehow get greater concessions from Rome. And the Sanhedrin didn't want the power of Rome broken. The people did.

We saw Friday night that there was a little small company in in Israel at the time of zealots, nationalists trying to break the power of Rome. But Israel had settled down on her knees, contentedly making her peace with Rome, performing a ritual, keeping the smoke going from her offerings in the temple, but losing sight of that which was to come of her. And it was three magicians, three wise men, three priests of Oriental religions that were there that came, led by the star, led by God, in order that perhaps through them might be provided that which was necessary for the sustenance of the little family when they were in

their exile in Egypt, for they brought gifts that would have been easy to carry and would have represented great wealth and would have sustained them in Egypt for a considerable time.

But when these three wise men came to Jerusalem, they said, where shall he be born? Where? Went to Herod, and Herod was there representing everything vile and evil and lustful and selfish. Everything an open rebellion against God while outwardly kowtowing and bowing to the religion of the day, but no heart in it. And Herod said, well, we'll send for the priests.

Where is he to be born? The answer came back, Bethlehem of Ephrata, out of thee shall come the deliverer. And so they went, knowing from the woman, from the bride, from the woman, where the child should be born. But there was no interest, no evidence that so much as one of the priests said, we'll join you.

Herod, of course, in his subtlety said, bring me word that I may come and worship. But we know what was in his heart, for God led Herod, led the Magi to go away by another road and peaked and crossed and angry. He did as you would expect a despot under satanic control to do.

He sent his soldiers down to Bethlehem and they slew the children, every child under two years of age. Now, many of people, many scholars rather feel that the Magi didn't come on the evening of the birth of Christ, but they came in some months, 18 months, two years afterward. But as the case may be, and we needn't decide upon it nor attempt to settle it, still it was in God's time that they came and for God's purpose that they came.

This we know, that every child two years of age and under in Bethlehem was slain. And archaeologists were amazed some years ago in opening one of the cellars in the city to find skeletons of scores of little children that age and younger, which could have been actually those that had been cast into the pit. This was the dragon working through Herod to destroy the male child.

Now, notice as we come to this fourth verse, he was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born. But he failed, he failed. She brought forth a man child.

Our Lord Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, was protected by God's sovereign intervention and supernatural provision, carried down into Egypt, for he said, out of Egypt have I called my son. And then back by the road of the Red Sea or the, excuse me, the Mediterranean Sea, back into Nazareth and from there to his ministry at the age of 30, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Unto us, said Isaiah, a child is born, unto us a son is given.

And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And upon of his government there shall be no end. This child that was brought forth of Israel was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up unto God.

Well, this carries with it in these few phrases the life of Christ and the ministry of Christ and the death of Christ on the cross and his victory in rising from the dead and all that he accomplished by his resurrection and then his ascension into heaven and his enthronement at the right hand of the Father. Her child was caught up unto God and to his throne. He had left a throne to come.

All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. He had left that throne for a manger. He left that throne for a carpenter shop and for a cross.

But now he's there. When he was there before his incarnation, he was there in spirit. For God is spirit is the eternal son.

But you see, when he went back, he went back as the man that was given of Israel. And dear heart, there's a man in the glory tonight. This is the truth of the resurrection.

There's a man in the glory with a body, a body of flesh and of bone, a body that has eaten the fish on the shore of Galilee, a body into the hands of of whom have been placed the fingers of his disciples. They have felt him and handled him. And he's he's there.

He's in there in the glory. And this is the marvel of it, that to Jesus Christ, the God man, after his resurrection, all of the attributes of the triune God are manifest in a man. And thus this man, this child that was born, has been caught up to his throne.

And the wonder of it is that the one who sits upon the throne that has all authority in heaven and earth as a human body. Now, the life is not in the blood, but in the spirit. But be sure of this.

It's a body like unto your body. And he rules for it is to the throne. Now, when the dragon was unable to destroy the son, the child, what did he do? He turned to the woman.

For you find the continuity here that God's people before the cross of the coming of Christ are called the woman and then God's people afterwards are called the woman is not the church known as the bride of Christ. Indeed, it is. And everyone that's in Christ is part of that bride.

And so we find the continuity. John sees the woman now as the object of Satan's hatred. He couldn't do anything to the child.

He tried, but he couldn't succeed. And the child was caught up under God into his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared of God that he should feed her there a thousand, two hundred and twenty and three score days.

I will not literalize the days and say that they represent some period in the past or in the future. But may I be so bold as to suggest that the days represent the entire time that God wants the church to be in the world, however long that may be there there. And this is to be his purpose.

He's going to take care of his bride. He's going to take care of those which are his fled into the wilderness. She has a place prepared of God and God is going to feed her.

What did our Lord Jesus Christ say in Matthew 16 as he gave that revelation to the disciples? You recall how he said to them, whom do men say that I am? And the answer was, some say that you're Elijah and other that you're Jeremiah. Well, whom so and some that you're Isaiah, whom do you say that I am? And Peter, speaking for them, said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. All right.

He said, all right, Peter, upon this rock, upon this fact that I am the Messiah, that I am God come in the flesh, that I have come to redeem, to ransom, to deliver upon this truth, this grand central fact of revelation, that I am the Christ, the son of the living God. I am going to build my church. And what? The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The gates of hell, you know that at the gate was where the judges sat in the in the Old Testament parlance, it was the place where the government was represented. And so when he says this, he is saying

that all the strategies and all of the powers and all of the subtleties and all of the delusions that Satan can invent and all of the clandestine efforts that it can exert are not going to prevail against my church. This is the glorious truth.

Now, this woman that fled into the wilderness is not the church as it's been seen in its physical splendor. You must make a distinction between the church and the church. You must indeed, if you ever understand the scripture, you must recognize that the church is not the organization.

That has been visible, exerting political power, producing its popes, producing its organizations, producing its political pressures. This is not the woman that fled into the wilderness. That church has never needed to flee.

It's had its armies. It's had its forces. It's had its powers.

It's had its princes. It's never needed to flee. Well, from what should it flee? It was quite capable of competing in the halls of argument and debate and politics.

No, no. This public thing, this visible thing, has never fled into the wilderness. I think one of the most interesting studies that you can make is the little church that's existed parallel to the organized church.

You go back in church history and you discover that shortly after Constantine married the church to the world in 313 A.D., that the persecution broke out. There was a little company of people called the Montanists. They were not very numerous, they weren't very strong, but they refused to bow to that organization that exerted such tremendous pressure and was the church.

And so what do we find? We find the church history is filled with arguments against the Montanists and accusations against the Montanists. And this little people were hounded and hunted and hurt, driven out and persecuted and slain by whom? By the world? Oh, no. Listen, when Constantine married the church to the world, no longer did persecution, strangely enough, come from the world.

It now came from the church. Isn't that isn't that interesting? Previously, Satan had been outside. He'd been trying to destroy by persecution, by attack, but he didn't do it.

Now, who's leading persecution? The church. They're the ones that are performing the inquisitions and calling for execution. The Montanists, and a little later, sometime later, you have the Albigensians, and then you come up to the Waldensians and the Anabaptists.

And all across the centuries, you have that little group that didn't bend and didn't bow and didn't break, a little group, hidden, aided. And then, of course, in the church, you had those who were renegades against authority. Or you go back to Francis of Assisi, and here is this dear man that loved God and who had no time for the machinations and the politics of the organization in which he was a part.

And you come on later and you find Savonarola, that man that dared to stand and indict the sins of the day. And still further, you find that you have such men as Meister Eckert and John of Roysbrook and Toller. And finally, you come down to Archbishop Fenelon and Madame Guion.

Who was it that put Madame Guion in prison? What was the reason for her going? Because of her evangelical testimony. Always across the centuries, God's had his few, he's had them, and the history is replete with the woman in the wilderness. God has kept them.

And today he still has them. Is it the great denominations meeting in their world efforts, their ecumenical enterprises? Is this the church? I think not. I think not.

I think it's those that are invisibly to organization and to political calculators, the little group perhaps meeting together someplace today in Siberian slave camp, sitting there unable to have wine or bread, but drinking cold water and doing it in the name of the Lord, squeezing the currents that they've saved and get something that would tint the water red to speak to them of the blood that was shed. I see that little company in the hills of China as they've gathered behind the bamboo curtain. They're not the ones that are in the Three-Self movement down in Shanghai.

They're not the ones that have recognition. They're not the ones that get into the report of leaders. They're the little group that are here persecuted and hated and hounded.

And they're the ones he's sustaining and he's supporting. He has them and he has them here. I don't suppose for one moment that every member of the body of Christ in our local areas in this fellowship, nor would I think for a moment that every member whose name is on our rolls is in the body of Christ.

But I would simply say this, that if you're in Christ, you're in the church. If you've been born again, filled with the spirit, you're his, you're in the church. And if you're in the church and in Christ, then you haven't a great deal of interest in all these other things.

They're very peripheral, they're extraneous, they don't amount to much. You're not interested because you've been driven into the wilderness and all you can see is Jesus. He fills the horizon of your heart.

So tonight, let's remember that the woman has fled into the wilderness. She has a place prepared of God. And all as long as time continues, until the last member is in and the number is complete and the Lord says the mystery of God is finished, he's going to feed and sustain and protect his church.

Don't think for a moment that it's going to be finished until the Lord finishes it. No, no, indeed. Now, let us notice it goes back again here in verse seven, there was war in heaven.

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon fought in his angels and prevailed not, neither was their place found anymore in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him.

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation. Now, this is true in two particulars. First, it's true of that which we have recorded in the Old Testament where Lucifer and his angels were cast out.

I think, however, that appeared a little earlier up here in the third verse. Personally, I feel that verses seven to nine give to us that which transpired at the resurrection of Christ, when captivity was led captive and Christ was given that throne. Previous to that, it seems that Satan had the power to go into the presence of God and accuse those whom God had called.

Their redemption had not been accomplished. They were living in faith and anticipation. And you know, from the record of Job, that Satan did appear before God, accusing Job.

And I would suggest to you that possibly this gives us insight into the fact that up until the time of the resurrection of Christ, this was one of the things that Satan could do, to go into the presence of God and

accuse those that were among the redeemed. But it seems that the coming of Christ to his throne meant that the power that Satan had exerted in these heavens, this ability to accuse before him, was forever finished and that he can't do that any longer. For there is one in the heavens now who has our names written in his hands.

And we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And if you're in Christ and trusting in his shed blood, you needn't fear of one going into the presence of God and bringing accusation. No, I believe that this is no longer the function of Satan, that it can't be done, that he was cast out, that we have here this war in heaven, Michael and his angels enforcing the victory of Christ, and that no longer is he able to go into the presence of God accusing the redeemed.

For we have one there, our advocate, whose blood testifies to the efficacy of cleansing and the sufficiency of grace. I would suggest at the same time, however, that probably he doesn't do that any longer, but he has succeeded in getting the brethren to accuse each other. He used to be the accuser of the brethren, but now apparently his strategy, since he's been cast out of heaven, has given to get the men and women to make accusations against each other.

And oh, how often it is that when you sit with a company of people, instead of letting their hearts be filled with glorious adoration of the risen Christ, they turn out to be lint pickers, criticizing preachers and criticizing Christians and criticizing this, criticizing that. That function, which was satanic, the accuser of the devil, accuser of the saints by the devil, now no longer is permitted to him. So his same spirit seems to prevail in the hearts of backslidden Christians who do it.

I submit to you that if you should discover that you have such a proclivity and tendency that you deal with it as the fever that we saw last Sunday morning, wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if for hereafter in our fellowship, when someone came around to criticize, you'd say, my, I'm so sorry you have a fever today. I do trust you'll be better. I think that nothing more than that would have the effect of just making it seem so ludicrous and so ridiculous that after a little while of saying, well, I'm so sorry you have a fever, this would just completely stop it.

And the devil would have lost one of his prime strategies of robbing the Lord Jesus of the blessing and the victory that was his by his being sent to his throne. No, no, he's no longer able to go into the presence of God because there's one there whose names are who has our names written in his hands. And when accusation is leveled against his own, he said, see, father, I suffered, I died, I shed my blood.

And if you have an accusation against them, you level it at me. Marvelous to realize that this is no longer possible. No wonder the loud voice cried in heaven.

Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ. For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night. Marvelous to realize this, too, is one of the victories of our Lord's triumph.

It is finished. No longer can the enemy engage in this nefarious and wicked task. And now we come to verse 11, the secret of victory of the woman in the wilderness and every child of God assaulted and attacked by the enemy.

They overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they love not their lives unto the death. I'm going to leave that and conclude with it in just a moment.

Let us now go on to see the rest of the chapter. We'll come back to verse 11. Therefore, rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast onto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle.

She might fly into the wilderness, into her place where she is nourished for a time and times and half time from the face of the serpent. I was interested in reading one commentator who said the wings of the eagle are two and the one is the word of God, the other is prayer, and they both carry him into the presence of the Lord where he's sustained and strengthened. Well, that's lovely typology and a very true, you know, we do have the word of God in prayer and there's something that we can lay hold of.

Perhaps it'll bless some heart. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. I would suggest to you that possibly this water that is here referred to is satanic delusions.

We've seen that this was the trumpets and out of his mouth come floods that would have the tendency to destroy, to drown. Could it not be well seen by us today that this flood, which has come, which is of satanic origin, which is permitted of God because of the fact that the world has rejected the gospel for always. Remember, satanic delusions arise at least since the time of Christ where the gospel has been spurned, neglected and rejected.

Now, could it not be here that these floods are such just take some of the philosophies that have become so prevalent in the last 200 years. Think of the multitudes that have been destroyed by them. Think of that higher criticism, which has attacked the inspiration and authority of the scripture.

Think of that blatant modernism, which has denied the deity of Christ. Think of some of the other things that are related to it, such as communism, which has engulfed such a large portion of the world. But what happened? What happened in this? Take this atheistic communism as it went into Russia, did it succeed in swallowing up the church and drowning church? Oh, no.

I would suggest to you, though I can't prove it at the moment, that there are probably more Bible believing evangelical Christians today disenfranchised, of course, and certainly not members of the party in power. But I would suggest to you that probably one of the purest expressions of the Church of Jesus Christ would be found in Russia. And I would say that if you go into the some slave camps, you would find their churches meeting underground and clear across the country.

You know, it's a marvelous thing to realize that God makes the wrath of men to praise him. And isn't it marvelous here that when these floods came out, the earth helped the woman notice that the earth helped the woman and the earth opened her mouth and followed up the flood, which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And so the woman, the church, the redeemed, those are the Lord's people.

They weren't destroyed by it. It all came to destroy them, but they were protected because the earth helped and the earth became the blotting paper, if you please, that absorbed it and sopped it up. They opened their mouth and swallowed it up, but not the church, not his own.

And today, I remember years ago, this is 20, 25 years ago, I guess, when first I began my ministry, I heard a man tell of an experience that he had in Russia. He had come out of Russia, but the secret police had learned that there was a little group meeting in a hidden place and they'd been spied upon by one of the police. The hour came when they had to make the arrest.

And so this captain of the police led his group in and came to the front of the little hall where they were meeting, wasn't a church in any formal sense, but a hall. And he came up and he said, in the name of the law, stop and you're all under arrest. And he called up his soldiers and had them go to the entrance.

Now, he said, I've done my duty and you are arrested and you are to be taken to prison. But as I have spied upon you and listened to what you said, I have come to believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. And whereas my duty said that I must arrest you, my heart says I must join you.

And so he took off his epilepsy, took off his guns, he took off the insignias of his authority and he laid them down and he held out his hands to the manacles and walked out with the others that were led away. He'd done his duty. He'd had to, out of faithfulness to those whom he served, to arrest them.

But as one who'd come to believe in Jesus Christ, he joined them. And this is what's happening. And the Lord is gathering his own in spite of it all.

And all the flood of diabolical satanic delusion are not going to prevail because the church isn't going to be doing have it. When you find delusions come in and you say, well, look at all these people, what's God doing? He's winnowing. He's winnowing.

I heard someone speak about one of our mission fields and he said, isn't it a terrible thing what's happening to the Christians? No, no, terrible things don't happen to the Christians. Terrible things happen to people that have a name to live and they discover that they don't have life. But terrible things don't happen to the Christians.

Christians die for Christ. They die for him because they love him. They're born of him.

They partake in his life. They love not their souls unto death. Nominal professors, they turn around and flee and they are victimized.

But sometimes the Lord has to let that go through, just like he lets a torch go through the field. Not to his church. What did he say? The dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.

But he didn't do any good because the remnant of his seed keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now, back to verse 11 as we conclude, and they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony, and they love not their lives unto death. Listen, every one of us are subject to satanic assault.

You see, we forget that we live in a world, the God of which is Satan. We forget that we live in a world in which there are a myriad of evil spirits and demons. We forget that those demons are continuously looking for minds and intellects that they can use and wills that they can control.

And we forget that Satan is doing everything he possibly can to get vehicles through which he can express his own diabolical ideas. The scripture tells us very explicitly, give no place to the devil. One of the tragic

consequences of sin in the life of a Christian.

Broken fellowship with God is that it exposes the heart and opens the life to satanic attack. And oh, dear child of God, hate sin, fear God and hate sin. When you find you grieved God, make haste to flee from it, confess it, forsake it.

Know the cleansing of the blood. Don't allow yourself so much as a moment being exposed to the attacks of the enemy because all the fiery darts come when the helmet is off. Ideas and suggestions come to the imagination and to the intellect.

But this is the manner through which he moves, just as the spirit of God moves through the truth that's brought to the mind. So Satan, as he moved in the garden, making suggestions to Eve, moves today and the fiery darts that are directed are invariably directed to the imagination. That's why the scripture says, gird up the loins of your mind.

Don't let your mind go wild gathering. Don't let your mind run around like an untrained puppy that's never known, learned how to come to heel. No, no, don't do that.

What are you to do you to put on the whole armor of God and in that whole armor of God is the helmet of salvation. And that's this is what it says. They overcame him through the blood of the lamb.

What does this blood testify to? It testifies that God became flesh and dwelt among us. It testifies that the Lord Jesus met Satan in open conflict. As we saw this morning, that love, light, life and truth took everything that hatred, darkness, death and the like would bring.

And our Lord conquered Satan in open conflict. The resurrection of Jesus Christ testifies that he's led captivity captive, that he reigns today. The blood of Jesus Christ is hated.

Why is it that wherever you find men beginning to waver in their loyalty to the truth, the first thing they attack is the blood? It was Charles Spurgeon that said to the young preachers of Pastors College, make much of the blood, sing of the blood, speak of the blood for Satan hates it. When you're under the blood and covered by its merit, you're protected. Oh, how Satan hates the blood, for it was that blood which was shed at Calvary, which destroyed his power, which brought him into defeat.

Remember this, dear friend, that when you speak of the blood of Christ, you are speaking of the life of Christ poured out at the cross, which pouring out of life meant the destroying of the power of him that had the power of death. And so make much of the blood. It is they overcame him through the blood of the lamb, through their realizing that this was the occasion of conflict.

This was the occasion of satanic defeat. This was the occasion of triumph. They overcame him through the blood of the lamb.

Oh, when you go out in the morning, just as you'd put your hat on against the rays of the sun or the cold, so cover your mind with the precious blood. And when you begin to find imaginations and thoughts creeping in, resist them, refuse them, confess them, ask God to cleanse you. Don't harbor thoughts of bitterness or strife or uncleanness or selfishness.

Deal with the thought as though it were the sin fulfilled. Deal with the thought as though it were the crime committed. And God will protect you from the crime and protect you from the sin.

Keep on the helmet of salvation. And then it says the word of the testimony. What's the testimony? The testimony is that they discovered themselves vile and undone, wretched and worthy of death and hell.

And they came to the cross and saw Christ dying for them. And they've seen them Christ crucified and buried and raised and seated. But what else do they testify to? That when Christ died, they died.

When Christ was buried, they were buried. And when Christ was raised, they were raised. When Christ was seated, they were seated.

How did they overcome? Come in the word of the testimony, their union with Christ. Have you learned to testify this? Have you learned to take your place, crucified with Christ and buried with him and quickened with him and raised with him and seated with him? Have you? Have you learned the throne rights of the believer? Have you entered into it? Oh, I'd love to teach you. I've pressed upon everyone that would hear me and receive it.

The little book, the authority of the believer. I know of nothing more imperative to the child of God in days such as these than to understand the principles therein. It's desperately needed in the church, for the church is being ravaged by a defeated fall because she's never learned that she's overcomes by the blood of the lamb and the word of a testimony.

He's the high priest of our profession. And when we profess what he's accomplished, he's able to bring the benefit of it into our lives. And so if you're harassed, if you're burdened.

If you're troubled by the enemy and assaulted. Move on to this ground, come in, crucified with Christ and buried with him and quickened with him, raised with him and seated with him. This is where you are to live.

This is your habitat. This is your abiding place. Seated with Christ, the word of your testimony and the blood of the lamb.

They overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they love not their lives unto death. May God bring this to your heart, glorious, delivering reality. You want freedom.

You want victory. You want to see the Lord Jesus glorified in your life. So does he.

He died to make it possible. It's about prayer. Our father, we thank and praise thee tonight for the victory of Christ.

This resurrection day, we see him leading captivity captive. The chain hosts of hell that laughed and mocked at him in his anguish and thought they'd accomplished that strategic defeat of the son of God would never have done what they did had they known that by means of his death. Him that had the power of death would be destroyed.

Oh, how we praise thee for thy wisdom. We praise thee for thy grace and power. We thank thee for the Lord Jesus to provide this salvation, was willing to endure the cross, despising the shame that he might bring us life and that abundantly.

Tonight, we know our father, the woman, the church is still hiding, still persecuted. Those of us that testify to the truth are still going to be despised and rejected. But at the same time, our father, we know that all of the attacks of Satan, the dragon will not prevail and that even when he succeeds in having one of thine own killed, it is but to send them with a martyr's crown into thy very presence.

Nothing can touch the church. Nothing can touch it. Oh, father, tonight, show us that thou hast given us this glorious victory.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age. Thou hast given us panoply and covering and armor, and thou hast told us that we can overcome through the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony. We thank thee for those that have gone before us that have testified to their victory.

No, God, may we join that company. May we walk with them steadfast, loving not our souls, even unto death, willing, if need be, to go that way. But grant, Lord Jesus, that while we live, there shall be no compromise, no swallowing of the water out of the devil's mouth, no pollution of the delusions of satanic origin.

Keep us pure and clean, vessels unto honor, a church that can glorify thee even though hidden in the wilderness. Make it true, Lord Jesus, that out of our lives glory shall come to thy name. For those that are here tonight that do not know the joy of this life and the peace that thou didst bring and the forgiveness and pardon and release and victory and blessing, oh, that they might enter into night.

And for thy dear children, might they covet and claim and enter into all the heritage that's theirs in Christ. And take this one verse, Lord, imprinted deeply on our minds. Don't let us forget it.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Let this be our victory, Lord, victory of this church, this testimony. May it be true, Lord, that thou didst get something for thyself here that will bring glory to thee in the name and for the sake of our Lord Jesus, we ask.

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