

Pastor Tom Mortenson

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The Woman, the Child and the Dragon

Revelation Part 13

Prayer: *Father, I just want to thank you for this time, I just thank you for your book and I just again all of the fantastical things that are in, particularly in this book of Revelation, and again it's been a journey, it's halfway through and I just continue to pray that you would, by the power of your Holy Spirit, give me the ability to kind of work through this in a way that is God glorifying and God honoring and understandable as well. I pray for again the presence of your Holy Spirit this morning, that you would guide us, that you would direct us and that you would again make this of permanent value, and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

As I've mentioned probably way back at the very beginning, this particular book has with it a particular blessing in reading it aloud and so we've had Pete's been reading for us, he's going to read for us our chapter 12, all of chapter 12 this morning. So Pete, would you?

And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun,

with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days. Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And 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 brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you

who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Okay. Well, once again we are faced with a myriad of interpretations about this great sign that has taken place in heaven. And we have all kinds of questions, you know, who is this woman? Who is the child? And what does this dragon represent? Well, if you're the Roman Catholic church you are certainly picturing the woman clothed with the sun as Mary. In fact the church that I attended as a young man had a painting on the ceiling of Mary with the sun blazing all around her and a crown of twelve

stars and she was standing on the head of a snake. Again it was the church's way of saying that Revelation 12 is describing Mary's role in defeating the devil. And we know Mary obviously produced the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, perhaps more appropriate to John's vision though would be the assumption that this woman clothed with the sun is not actually Mary but instead the nation of Israel. And the clue to that is that Mary's surrounded with the sun, the moon and the twelve stars and if you remember Joseph's dream all the way back in *Genesis 37*, it says: *Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."*

Well, in Joseph's dream, Jacob his father is the sun, his mother Rachel is the moon and clearly the eleven children, they're the stars with Joseph being the twelfth star and Joseph and his eleven brothers, they're the patriarchs responsible for the nation of Israel, and together they represent the nation that produced the Messiah.

And finally there are those who say no, no, it's not Mary, it's not Israel, in fact it's the church. And they say that because of what we find in verse 17 where it says: *Then the dragon became furious*

with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea. So here we have the dragon making war not just on the child but on the rest of the woman's offspring who in this case are those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus, which is clearly and obviously the church.

So which is it? I mean what is it the dragon is attacking? Is it the woman clothed in the sun, is it Mary, is it Israel, is it the church? Well the answer is yes to all three. Every one of them is legitimate, and every one of them can be represented by this vision. You see all of them, Israel, Mary and the church, they're all being attacked by the dragon because they all have an integral part in the ongoing war between the kingdoms.

I mean this chapter's by far the hardest one to grapple with because it's moving constantly from image to image, from time to time in ways that even the commentators struggle mightily to grasp. And what we find in this chapter is the whole story of the gospel recapitulated through fantastic images. And one thing that it pictures is the one thing you've heard me repeat over and over and over again and it's the fact that much of the gospel has to do with this war that exists between the two kingdoms, the kingdom of light

and the kingdom of darkness.

If you go back to the very beginning to the book of Genesis, there we find the beginning of this war, at least that part that takes place on earth. War had already broken out in heaven because we find Satan now on earth, he's in the form of a serpent who's actively involved in trying to get Adam and Eve to commit treason against their creator. As you know, God gave them all of paradise with one exception, there was the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that he expressly forbade them from eating. There was the one command the serpent dedicated himself to tempt Adam and Eve to violate. And when he succeeded Adam and Eve did far more than simply disobey a direct commandment from their God. Actually what they did was they altered their very nature alienating themselves from their creator.

See, one essential part of their nature that they shared with God was their perfection. Now theirs was untested and untried, God's perfection had been his from all time. It was Adam and Eve's perfection that united them with their creator and it was their perfection that the serpent was determined to separate them from if only he could get them to disobey God.

So when they ate that forbidden fruit, they in essence gave up

their perfection and fell out of fellowship with a still perfect God. Now they truly did understand what Satan meant when he said: *"When you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* Well they now knew good and evil in a way they never anticipated. So no longer perfect, they were no longer like their creator and so round one clearly went to the serpent. This was the start of the war on earth between the kingdoms.

And God's response to that war was the first bit of good news that we find in scripture and it happens way back in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, they had become aware that they were naked, they're now hiding from God, God brings Adam and Eve and the serpent before the bar of justice and this is what he says to the serpent. He said: *"Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*

So God tells the serpent war is now declared between him and the woman, between his offspring and her offspring. Well his offspring are demons. Her offspring is the Lord Jesus Christ. And the good

news is that Jesus will strike the enemy's head while the enemy strikes his heel. This war will come down to an epic battle after a long series of minor battles and then the battle will take place at the cross and there the enemy struck Jesus but only on the heel. Jesus struck the serpent a fatal blow on the head when he rose from the dead, having defeated the enemy's primary weapon and that was death itself.

Well, in essence Revelation 12 is telling us this same story in pictorial form. This woman who's clothed with the sun is both the church and Israel and Mary, all of whom produced the same one who would bruise the serpent's head. Israel produced Mary, Mary produced the child, the child grew into the Lord Jesus Christ who struck the serpent on the head at the cross, and it was the child who, starting with the disciples, produced the church. And each in its own way is the bitter enemy of the serpent.

And so this story in *Revelation 12*, it goes on to describe the enemy, he's no longer a serpent, now he's a dragon. We pick up on verse 3. It says: And another sign appeared in heaven: *behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.*

Now, I have to tell you there's so much speculation about what the heads and the horns and the diadems mean. I hesitated to even get into it. Suffice it to say we know that dragon is Satan and we know that because all you have to do is look forward to verse 9 and it tells us so. It says: *And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world -- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

We're also told that he swept a third of the stars of heaven and cast them down to earth. Well, thankfully this is not referring to celestial bodies; that's an impossibility. In fact what it's referring to is the angels that fell with Satan becoming demons in the process. This great red dragon, he sits at the feet of the woman waiting for her to deliver her baby so he can devour it. And again this paints a composite picture of the repeated attempts by the enemy to kill the Savior before he's able to do any damage to Satan, and we see that in scripture.

We go back as far as Cain murdering Abel and we see the enemy trying to wipe out every single part of the line that's going to produce the Messiah. We see Pharaoh trying to wipe out Israel, we see Saul trying to wipe out David, we see Haman trying to wipe out Esther and Herod trying to wipe out every male child two and under.

And all of these, all of these represent repeated attempts by multiple different enemies to wipe out Israel as a nation or simply the red dragon trying to destroy Israel before she's capable of producing a child.

I mean that warning, if you remember the warning that Mary and Joseph got to flee to Egypt, that was because that red dragon would have wanted nothing more than to destroy both Mary and Joseph so they couldn't raise the child. Herod's attempt to kill every male child age two and under is yet again the red dragon trying to devour the child. And every subsequent attempt to destroy the church is again an effort by the dragon to wreak havoc on the child and his offspring which is the church which is us.

So we have three main characters in this vision, we have the woman, the dragon, and the child. And John goes on to say in verse 5: *She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne.* Well this one's actually relatively easy. We know the adult child will rule the nations with a rod of iron, we know that that child is Jesus because *Psalm 2* tells us. It says: *The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and*

dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

So that male child being caught up to God and his throne is a direct reference to the absolute victory that Jesus had over Satan. See, after Jesus had gone to the cross we all know he lay in the tomb for three days and the world is wondering if his sacrifice had been flawless and therefore acceptable. And what we celebrate in Easter is the fact that he rose from the dead, he proved that his sacrifice was indeed flawless. And it was Jesus's ascension into heaven, as at text says, being caught up to heaven that drove the final nail in the coffin of the enemy.

You know, I had the privilege this week of conducting the burial service for our brother Leon. And there we read a passage from *1 Corinthians* which says this, it says: *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."*

Well, that victory took place at the cross and it was fully realized at the resurrection and demonstrated in Jesus' ascension into heaven where he took his place at the right hand of the Father. And this scripture that we read at the burial of believers, it actually mocks the enemy's attempts to destroy us

through his ultimate weapon and that's death itself because on the cross, Jesus literally defeated that enemy. And so we ask at the grave site, we say, "*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*" *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

You see, ever since the cross of Christ Satan has been a defeated foe and all that's left is for history to play itself out as it's doing right here and right now. And so we pick up on verse 6. And it says: *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.*

Well, this is where the church finds itself today, in a place prepared by God awaiting the very next move of the enemy. Bakers New Testament Commentary puts it this way. It says: "Three factors emerge from spending time in a desert: a person is completely dependent on God to provide the material and spiritual necessities of life; the desert is always a temporary place; and last, the desert is a place where God trains his people spiritually and prepares them for service. Thus, the members of the church depend on God to be their provider and protector; they also realize that their stay on earth is but temporary; and they know that they

are being trained for more extensive duties."

Well, see, that statement hits the nail right on the head. I mean our stay on earth is temporary, we are here right here, right now being trained for more extensive duties. John now brings us to an important event that occurred thousands of years ago but it has profound implications for today. This is verses 7 through 11. He says: *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world -- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And 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 brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."*

You see, we know from scripture this amazing thing that Satan for a long, long time, he had open access to heaven itself. We also know that he used that access to engage his primary role as the accuser

of the brethren. Perhaps the best example of that open access that Satan had lies in the dialogue that we see that took place between God and Satan over Job, all the way back in Job 1.

It says: *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."*

Well here we find Satan presenting himself to the Lord along with the sons of God not as a blessing but as an accuser, this time of God's servant Job. Satan says Job loves and serves God only because he gets something out of it. He tells God, you remove your blessing from Job and he's going to curse you right to your face. This is a classic move of Satan. He's in God's presence leveling

accusations as he always does. Well, at Jesus' ascension into heaven, that privilege ended forever for Satan. We find out at the moment that he ascends, Jesus ascends, war then breaks out and it breaks out between Michael and Satan.

And again also, here's where having a linear time frame becomes a problem. You see, we human beings, we think of time as a layer upon layer, event upon event, past, present, future. Well God views time in a completely different way. I mean we've already seen right from the very beginning of time in the book of Genesis there was already an ongoing conflict that put the serpent in the garden of Eden with the intent of causing Adam and Eve to fall. We just fast forward to this vision that we're looking at this morning, and the serpent has become the dragon and now we're tracking the dragon's attempt to devour the child to prevent him from reaching that point where the actual battle will take place and that's at the cross. But now only three verses later we're tracking a battle between Michael and archangel and a third of the angels and Satan and his angels. So we say where does this fit in linear time? Who knows. I mean from God's perspective I don't think it really matters. You see, it was at the cross that Satan was ultimately defeated. And after the resurrection, after God had proven that Jesus' sacrifice was perfect and accepted, Jesus then ascended into heaven.

Well, our vision in Revelation describes this as the woman giving birth to the male child who's going to rule the nations with a rod of iron and her child being caught up to God ascending to his throne. The actual verse says: *She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne.*

That's a strange part of the vision. The vision includes only two events. All it talks about is the birth of child and his ascension into heaven. The whole middle part's missing. Well, with reference to the war in heaven those are the only two events that matter. I mean, Jesus' ascension into heaven meant his absolute victory. It also meant that Satan would now be denied open access to God and to heaven and that his role as accuser in heaven would be formally ending now that we have Jesus up in heaven as our advocate.

If you remember every month during communion service I speak of that scripture in 1 John describing that role for Jesus, that Jesus is now someone who is in heaven speaking on our behalf. By now you should probably have it half memorized. He says: *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

And so to sum up, after Jesus has risen from the grave, Satan is now finally defeated and shortly thereafter when Jesus ascends into heaven we find there's a battle that's instituted by the archangel Michael. That's the interesting part. It was Michael who started this battle, not Satan, and Michael started it because he knew that Satan's role as an accuser was no more. The actual verse says: *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back.*

That scripture details the battle between Michael and his angels and Satan and his angels, and interestingly Jesus who's just ascended into heaven, he's not at all involved in this battle. That's because Jesus is God himself, he's high, high above even these battling angels and at any given moment Jesus could have snuffed Satan out because he was Satan's creator. But for reasons known to God alone, he chooses to allow these battles between the angels to take place. And we know that Michael prevails, we know that Satan was thrown out of heaven permanently and cast down to earth. We also know that's good news and bad news. See the good news is the ultimate victory in Christ. The bad news is what it means for planet earth. And we pick up on verse 12. It says: *"Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"*

So now before you panic realize God is talking about a period that started 2,000 years ago. Again, it was at the cross that Satan realized his great defeat and it was at his ascension that this war took place in heaven and Satan was cast down. And what it means is that Satan knows that he's on a time clock and he's on a time clock that's ticking down.

We don't know what that day is and apparently he doesn't know either but he does know that every single day that goes forward is one less day that he has. And so he's determined in an ever increasing way to wreak whatever havoc he can on the woman when represents Israel and Jesus the Messiah who came from Israel and the church which came from him. And again, verses 13 and 14 reflect that. It says: *And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.*

Well, we certainly know the dragon's been pursuing the woman because we know that the nation of Israel has been relentlessly pursued throughout the entire world. I mean from the time they've been scattered Jews have been universally and irrationally hated

until it came to the time of the Third Reich in Germany to encapsulate that hatred into a political movement. And again we can ask why is that? Why has this one people group been singled out throughout all of history? What is the one thing that marks Israel as different from any other group other than the fact that the Messiah will come from that nation? I mean it falls perfectly in line with the war against the kingdoms and Satan's understanding that his end is going to come from that nation.

And so as usual what the devil intended for evil with the Holocaust God was able to superintend for the creation of the nation of Israel, but it's yet another expression of this battle between the kingdoms. I mean this woman's been given the wings of an eagle and that's simply a reference to God's determination to protect his church when the tribulation begins in earnest. And folks, that hasn't started yet. And for the time being what matters to us is being aware that we are at war and us getting prepared to go to battle, and that simply means knowing your enemy.

You see, if you were to list the three things that the god of this world hates the most, they would be: Number one, Jesus the Messiah; number two, Israel the source of that Messiah; and number three, the church that came from that Messiah. They are the three most threatening things to Satan, and he passionately hates them

all. I mean, Jesus knew full well about that hatred. While he was here on earth he instructed the disciples that hatred is going to accompany every one of their professions of faith. And time and again he warned them to expect it. This is what he said. He said: *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."*

Do you ever wonder why the world hates Jesus so? I mean you think Jesus is being paranoid when he said the world hated him first, I mean, that it hated him without a cause? You know, sometimes when I'm engaged in conversation with folks about the gospel, I'll simply tell them, I say to them as kindly as I can, you don't really realize it but you hate God and you also hate Christ. People are astounded at that. They react with incredulity. How can you say that? I say, here's a little test. I said I can say the word "Jesus" and nobody's going to bat an eye. And I can say the word "Christ" and I'll get basically the same response, nobody cares. I can say "good Lord," and nobody will get upset. But somehow if I put those three words together and say "Lord Jesus Christ" people instantly get uncomfortable. They get offended at the name of Christ. I said why is that? I mean, why is it that all over the world when people feel the need to curse they always

use the very same name, Lord Jesus Christ in vain? I mean, it's not like Jesus is a curse word here in the United States and Mohammed is the curse word they use in the Middle East and Buddha's the curse word that they use in the East. It's universal, it's all over the world, people feel led to curse by invoking the name of Christ.

I mean, isn't it interesting considering that God felt so strongly about this issue, about misusing his name that he made it one of the Ten Commandments. He said: *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."*

You know, in Psalm 29 God tells us to *"ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name."* Folks universally think it's no big deal that the name of Jesus is almost always spoken in a highly inglorious way. David said: *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!* But we all know this same earth mocks that name constantly.

I think the next few verses give us a hint as to why the name of Jesus is so targeted. Verse 15 and 16 says: *The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman,*

and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

See, all we have to do is open our eyes and ears and look around us to see the flood that the serpent has unleashed. It's a flood of lies. It's a flood of murder. Jesus said of Satan: *"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*

And we learned the shorter his time grows, the more extreme he becomes. Violence and perversion and deceit and slander, lies and flat-out murder, that's his stock in trade and it's all rooted in his hatred for Christ, and it's flooding every single aspect of our culture today. Never in my lifetime have I seen anything quite like it. I mean, the most chilling aspect of the hatred expressed towards Christ and his kingdom is not just the raw emotion of it but the speed with which it's gaining traction.

Let me explain to you how it grows. Over 20 years ago, this was right after the Columbine shootings, Peggy Noonan wrote a column about how this flood and what Revelation is talking about, how it advances. She was prescient. She had an insight that you need to hear. This is what she said. She said: *"Think of it this way.*

Your child is an intelligent little fish. He swims in deep water. Waves of sound and sight, of thought and fact, come invisibly through that water, like radar; they go through him again and again, from this direction and that. The sound from the television is a wave, and the sound from the radio; the headlines on the newsstand, on the magazines, on the ad on the bus as it whizzes by—all are waves. The fish—your child—is bombarded and barely knows it. But the waves contain words like this, which I'll limit to only one source, the news." And then she lists about 20 different actual headlines from that very day that they are all about violence and perversion and deceit and slander and lies and murder and that's the flood flowing from the serpent, that's the flood that's drowning this culture. But that was over 20 years ago. I mean, those headlines, they look tame compared to the ones that we're reading today. Something far worse has happened, social media has replaced those headlines, and so the river from that monster has gotten bigger and deeper.

You know, back then we thought of the Columbine shooting as a one-off occurrence and since then there's been 376 additional shootings with 175 additional deaths because violence is everywhere. We say perversion, I mean this very week, this very week the Los Angeles Dodgers are set to honor an organization called the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence which exists solely to

mock and blaspheme Christianity. I can't even describe what they do because it's too vile to even mention. They're being honored, honored by major league baseball. I mean the idea of public libraries hosting drag queen story hours for youngsters, that would have been out of the question twenty years ago; now it's just a part of our social landscape.

And so deceit and slander and lies, the enemy's natural language, they're the normal talking points in every area of government, politics and education, and everybody knows it. That's the bad news. But we've got the good news. See, we've been given the answer to that flood. Jesus gave it to us. This is what he once said. He said: *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"*

You see, the answer to the flood of filth, perversion and violence is the counter flood that everything that Christ stands for. You see, there's not just one flood that is running through this culture, there's actually two. There's the flood coming from the dragon and there's a flood coming from Christ himself. And they create a choice: Violence or gentleness? Perversion or purity? Deceit or honesty? Slander or praise? Lies or truth? Murder or life itself. And the good news is this: This culture can only

offer a flood of filth, but those who have the Spirit of Christ within them can offer the flood of life itself.

And the bottom line for us believers, what Revelation is truly shouting is that the war between the kingdoms is no longer a cold war that's gone on for centuries, it's now a hot war and it's right here at our doorstep because the shorter the dragon's time gets, the more furious he is becoming. And chapter 12 concludes with that exact warning. This is what it says, it says: *Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.*

And again, the testimony of Jesus is that same simple gospel I gave last week, I mean, God and man have been separated by the sin of Adam, Jesus came to heal that separation by living a perfect life and going to the cross for us, and when we by faith trust in Christ as Savior, we inherit his righteousness and are able to stand before a holy God perfected in him. That's it. That's the gospel. That's the best news this world will ever know. And for the dragon, it's the worst news. It's the news he's committed to silence. He's gone off to make war with all those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus, and that's

us, folks.

And as bad and as grim as things may look to us, imagine what they look like to those who have no grasp of what's really going on here? See, I am absolutely convinced that people are desperate to find a way out of this flood that's overwhelming them and we are the ones who are privileged with the understanding of just what that is. And we're also tasked with the proclamation of the only news that truly matters, and that's the good news. So folks, it's time for us to join the battle. Let's pray.

Father, I just thank you that you've given us the insight that the world has no clue about. Father, I thank you for your grace, I thank you for your wisdom, I thank you for the gift of your Son. I thank you that he is the living water that again can stand against the flood that the dragon wishes to unleash. I pray that each of us would have the courage and the opportunity to explain to a world that's literally drowning in that flood what the source of life actually is. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.