

War Of The Worlds

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I invite you to turn in your Bibles this morning to the last book of the Bible, Revelation chapter 12. Revelation chapter 12, if you're a visitor, we are working through a preaching series through the book of Revelation and this morning we come to chapter 12. Revelation chapter 12. This is the word of the Lord.

1 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. 2 She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. 4 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. 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, 6 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. 7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world--he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10 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. 11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. 12 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!" 13 And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 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. 15 The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. 16 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. 17 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 there ends the reading this morning of God's word.

As we continue our study this morning in the book of Revelation, we come now to and begin today the fourth cycle of this book, fourth out of seven, and we're being really provided, as we have seen in the first three cycles, the same perspective of the struggle and conflict that we are in in this present age, but now things shift a little bit in the book of Revelation and we're going a little bit deeper into it, a little bit deeper into perspective to look at things from a heavenly perspective and realities stripped away from all the things that confuse us. We've looked a lot at how the battle takes shape in the earth; that is why the first three cycles have really been aimed at the church's witness, haven't they? They've really been focused on our witness and this struggle to fulfill the Great Commission, the Great Commission that we have been given because of all of the opposition and all of the distraction, the first three cycles were really calling us to stay focused on this commission that the Lord has given to us. The first three cycles were telling us, "Be faithful to this calling. Don't lose heart in this calling. Be patient. But you have to understand what you're going to go through." And those three cycles gave us some wonderful help to consider that. We are in a battle to hold fast the testimony of Jesus. That's what this is.

Well, now we're sort of taking a step even farther back as Revelation now begins to unmask the architect of all of the problems that we're facing. Revelation now begins to show us the great cosmic war that has been going on from the beginning; it's helping us to understand things now in light of that struggle. As I was preparing for this and thinking about these particular things, I thought this must have been really helpful to the first century Christian as Rome had risen up in opposition and so many things were going wrong in Rome as persecution was impending and coming on these Christians, I'm sure the question kept circulating among Christians: what I don't seem to get here, what I don't seem to understand, what's really confusing for me is why is this so hard at this particular point in history when we're proclaiming a victorious Savior? I'm really struggling with that. Why, if we're on this side of the cross, are things this hard? We have a message that we are called to proclaim of a victorious Savior who's reigning and this is hard for us to run around proclaiming a victory in the middle of this. What we're experiencing seems really kind of unparalleled in history. Now everyone always thinks that they're going through the worst at the moment that they're in of history, but it was true thinking of things from the first century, that they were really struggling with this particular question of why at this point in history. It's really hard for us to fulfill the Great Commission of the

church, proclaiming the Christ and victory with this kind of evil and this kind of hate being breathed down our necks. It's tough.

And I thought as I was preparing this, "Well, now I understand why chapter 12 matters so much." Chapter 12 is really dealing with that particular angle on this struggle for John now receives a vision in chapter 12 that says, "No, no, no, no, no, wait a minute. You have to understand that what you're involved with is the battle of all of history. You have to look at your place in this particular battle and time of which you are involved in it. The battle has been going on from the very beginning. What you are experiencing is the end of a long battle and abuse that has always been awful. It's always been bad. But you are part of a much bigger story." I thought of it in these terms. It's like a man and a woman who come to premarital counseling, their marriage is on the rocks, and the woman's done. The woman says, "I can't do this anymore. I'm just out." And the man says, "I have no idea why things are so hard at this moment." The counselor, if he has any bit of wisdom, is going to say, "What do you mean you don't understand? For a woman to get to this point, there's been a long history of abuse and problems. What's gone on? This is not new. This has been going on a long time. We have to go back." Well, essentially that's what Revelation 12 is saying to us, "What do you mean you have no idea what you're involved with and how hard this has been? This has always been a long history of a problem that has gone on. You're at the end of a long history of war. The very end of it and it's precisely because Jesus has won that you're in the worst moment. That's why it's so hard. It's precisely because he has won. Let me show this to you in this vision," chapter 12, as John receives the vision. "Let me give this to you in a vision, a picture for you to hold on to, stripped away of all the things that confuse you about this war. Let me make it really clear for you in a vision. We'll make it really clear with some symbolism so you understand exactly where you are and what's happened." That's Revelation 12. "Let me paint a picture of the conflict and fight that has been going on so that you can understand and you can appreciate right now why there's so much hatred, so much violence in the earth, so much hatred being spewed out in the earth, and why every evil under the sun is coming at you. Let me explain that." Don't you want to understand that? Isn't that a big question for us right now to think about?

So what we have here, then, is a description of the war of history, the cosmic battle, a presentation of who won the war and how it's gone in symbols, a presentation of who won and who is the sore loser in this whole thing. Loser. Well, that should help us understand, then, that what we are involved with is much bigger than you realize. That's why I always have a problem where everyone's running around trying to solve all of these earthly problems, thinking they're going to solve them on really an earthly level when I really need to say very clearly you're not solving these problems because it's a much bigger cosmic battle that's going on. That's what Revelation 12 is helping us understand.

The fourth cycle is describing this for us in the language of a battle. A woman and her son and a dragon and the woman's offspring, symbols. Let's look at it. Verse 1, "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." It's a really magnificent portrayal in this first symbol that's given to us. A beautiful woman is described at the beginning here. She

is radiant. She is glorious. She is beautiful. She's light-bearing. It's really something, isn't it? The divisions here, notice that what's being described here, the luminaries are used to describe her as she's wrapped in them, telling you how bright is her light. She is majestic. The sun is her strength. The garment. The light of the moon lights her path. The brilliance of the stars that we look up and see are her crown. All you want to say when you read the first part of Revelation 12 is this woman is beautiful, glorious, majestic, reflecting the brightest lights we know. By the way, this is just my moment to say don't look at the eclipse tomorrow because you need to keep your eyes. Don't say I never gave anything practical.

Verse 2, it describes this woman as in pain ready to give birth. Ready to give birth. I'm not sure what word to come up with here. There's something so precious, there's something so right about a woman carrying a child. It's pure. It's wholesome. It's a wonder to us. Beautiful. She's so delicate and fragile, isn't she? Beautiful image given. I hope I've captured it, because then set adjacent to this is the ugliest thing he could ever describe. A ravenous beast is right next to her. You really couldn't, in verse 3, come up with a more terrifying figure to set adjacent to this woman standing right next to her of this wonderful, beautiful, light image and then comes the symbol of the worst kind of figure we could ever imagine. Boys and girls, you should just grab on to this. It's a dragon. It's a monster.

"And another sign appeared in heaven," verse 3, "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." This is an awful figure. Red has already been captured and is captured in Revelation as the color of bloodshed. Seven heads and ten horns, we'll look at all this later, especially chapter 13 as we're getting the beasts and antichrists and these figures and authority structures, but all of this symbolizes great power of this foe. If you can get the imagery here, in the sky, we're looking up, there is this figure roaring, breathing out fire, foaming at the mouth. He's so out of control, so loud, so obnoxious, so boisterous, his tail is swinging around everywhere, knocking down stars. That's the imagery here. Out of control beast, breathing down fire, aimed all at the woman.

Well, the heart of the battle is then described in verse 4 as it all centers on the woman ready to give birth, and as soon as she was giving birth, he violently goes and looks for that child as it exits the womb to devour it. This is awful. It's like your beautiful pregnant wife walking through a dark forest alone and a ravenous foaming wolf comes out to rip her up and her child. That imagery, you say, the woman doesn't stand a chance, right? But something happens. She gives birth to a male child and this child was destined to rule the nations with a rod of iron and boom, he's caught up to God and his throne. In one sentence, the entire story is captured and told. What is this? Well, I've been telling you the whole time, Revelation's not hard. I think this is like the Catechism student who thinks, "I'm scared to death to make a profession of faith because I don't know if I know this stuff," and we get him in the room and we ask him the questions and it's just... They know it because they've been taught it their life and they didn't realize they know it. That's this. You know this story. This isn't hard. This story has been told to you your

entire life if you have been in the church and you have been under a ministry that preaches the central story of Scripture. The very first gospel announcement in Genesis chapter 3 came to us, and it said, from the Lord God, "And I will put enmity between you, Satan, and the woman, between your seed and her seed. You shall bruise his heel, but he's going to crush your head." There's the battle. That's Genesis 3. That was the first thing that was announced, the first gospel announcement you ever get in the Bible right there. A woman and a dragon. A woman and a serpent.

So we know this story. We've heard this story and the entire Old Testament was a description of and struggle presented to us of the people of God, Israel, the struggle of Israel to bring forth her Messiah. And boy, was that a struggle, wasn't it? All of history characterized the people of God as a woman, a bride, a radiant bride, a truth-bearing bride, the light in the earth, Israel as the people of God were the light, and the Old Testament story of these people bringing forth the child who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. That's Psalm 2. "Like a pregnant woman who rides and cries out," says Isaiah, "out in her pangs when she is near to giving birth, so we were because of you, O Lord. And all along the way, this is what we are because of you." Satan's great strategy throughout history was to kill the child. He couldn't accomplish this, but it was his hard working throughout history. I mean, you know this in Genesis. Eve bears a son, and she has Cain, and she has Abel, and the very first cosmic battle takes place right there where the seed of the serpent kills the seed of the woman. Knocks him down. She gets Seth, "I've got him." The battle continues all the way from who is it going to be? Ishmael, Isaac. Jacob and Esau have a feud and a war, these two seeds, trying to kill each other. Esau trying to kill him. Saul will take a spear trying to take out David. The line was always under assault. This was Satan's battle in history. If he could, he could stop the Savior from being born, it was over. It all came to an ugly head when Herod was on the throne, a descendant of Esau, and desperately tries to wipe out the babies, right? The story's all in front of you. You know the story.

Well, the vision now moves to tell us what happened to the son and what it meant for the dragon. In verse 7, the war is described as coming to a climax. As soon as he was caught up to God in his throne, a war breaks out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought, and the devil and his angels fought, and there was no longer found a place for Satan and his angels. This war breaks out in heaven. All throughout the Old Testament, the devil seemed to have access into the heavens for a great purpose. You'll remember that purpose when Job was being assaulted and it said, "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." Now he's up in heaven, ready to accuse Job. Same thing in Zechariah with Zechariah's garments. He comes up there and he accuses him of his filth. There had been nothing performed throughout the Old Testament to deal with humanity's problem of sin and Satan was known as the accuser of the brethren day and night. He would come up there, and he would say, "They're filthy. They're filthy."

Well, the woman prevails and brings forth a male child. As soon as this child was caught up to God and his throne, guess what happened in heaven? War breaks out. Michael, known as the archangel, a leader, one of the leaders of the angels, fights with Satan. A cosmic battle happens in heaven. Why don't you think of it this way, since we're starting Acts tonight, in Acts chapter 1, Jesus ascends into a cloud to go and be seated on the throne, and he tells them to wait in that Upper Room. "I want you to wait for the Holy Spirit to come. Don't you go anywhere until the Holy Spirit comes." You know why they were told to wait? Here's a reason. You ever wonder, you ever watched a movie when some out of control maniac is yelling and breathing threats in some building and here comes some tough guy who's going to go in there and you don't really see what happened, but all of a sudden you're hearing everything banging around and somebody's being thrown and beaten and he walks out and dusts off and he's the victor. That's what happened in heaven. Revelation 12 is telling us that at his ascension and before Pentecost, there was some real house cleaning that went on. War broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought and the devil and his angels fought and there was no longer found a place for them. In other words, he was finally cast down and no longer could bring an accusation anymore.

I love verse 10. It's such a wonderful verse announcing the victory that's ours. It says, "a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now,' now. When? The cross event, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, "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." The blood of the lamb, the testimony, sealed his death. The kingdom's come. Satan's been cast down.

Now I believe this is extremely important for us to understand, for first century Christians to grasp. Think about the implication of this. There is no more accusation, first and foremost. Everything's been paid. You see how Revelation's been motivating us the whole time? It's been saying, notice we overcame not with one work we did, by the way, not one. We overcame by the blood of the Lamb. That's gospel. It's done. The overcoming has happened. Revelation is motivating you and driving you in the certainty of a hope, as we've been talking about, because the victory is secure. The victory is won. You know, that's the heart of God's message to us today as we come into the wilderness and as we struggle that he is saying to you, "The accuser of your brethren who accuses you guys day and night, it's over." It's at the heart of what is one of your favorite verses in the Bible. In Romans 8, when Paul says, "What shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?" You know who he has in mind. "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give you everything?" So, consequence, who's going to bring a charge against God's elect? Who's going to do it? It's God who justifies you. Who is he to condemn? Who's going to separate you from the love of Christ? Who's going to do it? Who could accomplish it? The accuser's done.

You ever thought about how much you've done against your Lord? How much sin? Your own consciences rise up against you. You had a greater accuser. You didn't even realize it. When you didn't even know, there he came and he said, "Do you see what he's doing in private?" Listen, I wouldn't want my sins paraded on Facebook, let alone brought into heaven before God, would you? "Hey, Jesus, is that your righteous servant Noah drunk in a tent? Is that him? He's drunk! Look at Abraham, pawning off his wife twice. He doesn't love her. Look at all the sexual morality in Israel. Do you see what David's down there doing with Bathsheba? Didn't you say no fornication? Adultery? Didn't you say no gossip?" You feeling this? "Didn't you say that people should forgive and love? They don't love one another. They don't forgive. They're bitter. What are you going to do about that?" You see, if God has gone to the effort in giving up his own Son to take away the accuser, it should make you all the more repentant, right? It should make us think a lot about what we're doing. You know what God's done for you? He overcame by the blood of the Lamb so this is the truth today I get to proclaim, "And you who were once dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven," period, it's over, "having forgiven you all your trespasses," it's done, "by canceling the record of debt that stood against you with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed in that process rulers and authorities and put them to open shame," that's the devil for you, "by triumphing over them in it." That's Revelation 12. He just got beat down by the cross and the resurrection and he never more has the ability to come say, "Look at that person." So if you've come to Jesus, don't do that to yourself, right? I want you to say if Satan can't do this to you anymore, every time you say, "I've sinned, how could God love me? I overcame by the blood of the Lamb." That's where he wants you. That's where he wants you.

So he says, rejoice. That's the consequence in the earth for God's people. "Rejoice, O heavens," verse 12, "and you who dwell in them!" Rejoice, you've won. You know how Revelation is presented us, you're a people who belong to heaven. Rejoice, you who dwell in the heavens. That's you. That's us. We belong to the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city, not Babylon. You have been, we've looked at it, marked, measured, and it's all reserved for you, says Peter. Well, now let's get back to the core issue of the text then. Why the hate? Why the violence? Why are things getting worse? I want everyone to see something here. I think it's one of the most encouraging things I get to proclaim today where he says, "Therefore, rejoice, O heavens," you'll see this there, "Rejoice, O heavens," verse 12, "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!" The woe is not pronounced on you. Revelation pictures the believing people of Christ as dwelling in heaven and what has happened to Satan? He's been thrown to the earth. Remember Jesus said to his disciples, "I saw Satan fall from heaven-like lightning and because of that, I'm going to draw all peoples to myself." He said that in John 12. "Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out, and I'm going to draw all peoples to myself." That's the time we live. That's the reign. What's being said to us is, then, that the devil has been so defeated by the blood of the Lamb in our testimony, he has complete rage in coming down to this earth. The New Testament warns us of this over and over. 1 Peter, "Be sober-minded, be watchful." Why? Why? "Because

the devil, your adversary, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour." That's what's going on and he's got a bunch of minions to do it.

Notice the woe. You know, why you see all the hate, why you see all the racial division, you know why? You want to know why you see all the violence? Why you see all the destruction? Here's your reason: his single great purpose, his rage, his fury is at an all-time high on the peoples who dwell on the earth. He is giving it his all right now. Maybe this will help. We had a little betta fish, kids wanted a fish. We get a fish. A little betta fish. These things are interesting. You can't put a betta fish in a bowl with any other fish, right? These things fight. Beautiful looking red fish. There he sat day after day on the table. I'm tired of changing water. Named it Loopy. One day, for some reason, the wrong temperature went into the bowl. It was like he had just overdosed. The thing went sideways and went 100 miles an hour in that bowl. Why? It was dying. My greatest joy was to take it to the toilet and flush it at that moment. When you say, "Why are things so bad?" Because the devil's in our bowl, our sin contributes to all of this, the devil's in our bowl swimming like that. Why is there so much hatred in the earth? The devil's gone mad. He's confined to this bowl and he's furious he's dying. He's furious it's over. Tomorrow Satan goes in the toilet to hell. Now do you understand why things are so hard for us? "The whole world lies under the sway of the evil one," says John. All he wants to do is destroy. All he wants to do is rip apart. Don't be party to it. Choose your steps carefully.

What does Revelation 12 say? Since the woman has brought forth the child and he ascended, he won, his great goal in all of what you're seeing unfolded, it's one great goal. This is what you have to understand. This is so important: his great goal is to come after the woman's offspring. His aim is you and your children and that's much as is said in verse 16. See it? From his mouth, he's pouring forth a river, a mouth. He's speaking all kinds of falsehood, "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. 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." There are two ways he's making war; that's what you're experiencing. From his mouth is a flood of deception. And we've talked about this, we've gone through this. Look at all the deceit. Look at all the deception. Look at all the false ideas. There's a reason Paul told Timothy, "Listen to the faith of your mother Eunice and grandmother Lois." I might have got that backwards. "Listen to it. Hold on to it." You're just doing all you can to hold on to your faith. Flat out deception. And he's making war on those, now listen to this, it's a moral issue. He's making war on those who care about the commandments of God. What do you think he's doing then? What we're experiencing. Those who make the moral law a way of life, a rule of life, those are his aim.

I don't think you can miss what he's doing right now, create among the inhabitants of the earth as much division as possible. Look at the tactic. Create among the inhabitants of the earth as much division as possible. Cast the problem of these divisions as certain expressions of hate that everyone should rise up and speak against, and then oppose that hate with the devil's own hate and spew it among the people to silence what are the most

socially acceptable and acknowledged forms of hate. We all know we should condemn racism. We all know we should condemn KKK and Nazism and all this stuff. But he's using hate to conquer hate. Why? What's he accomplishing by doing that? He's getting his ducks in a row, take down all political barriers, opens then the road to silence the witness of the church. If he can associate Christianity with that hate, he can spew his hate right back. It's his goal. The point is, whatever you're seeing happen in a given society, his goal is to come after ultimately the woman's offspring. That's his goal. Don't think that everything you're seeing play out right now on this plane in front of us is not in some strategic way to come after the woman's offspring, Jesus' followers. That's the ultimate aim of this. He's very strategic.

And here's what I love about the vision: God sent the woman into where? The wilderness for 1,260 days, same period as the two witnesses, three and a half years; it captures the whole witness of the church in this present age. When the Son was caught up to the throne, we were sent into the wilderness. What are we doing? Did you see what he said? He sent them into the wilderness to nourish them. "I'm going to nourish them in the wilderness. I'm going to care for them." The woman was given, this is all Israel language, "two wings of a great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness to a place where she is to be nourished for a time, times, and half a time as church. The serpent poured out 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." Where is that taken? You know. What did God do for Israel? Pulls them out of Egypt, out of the world. Conquers the Pharaoh and his army at the Red Sea. Drowns them. That's just Satan's story. Brings them out into the wilderness for a time and nourishes them there and what did he do for them? When the Amalekites came, they prayed, Revelation 8. He defended them. Every day he fed them with manna. He nourished and he cared for them and he tested them. It was a testing period. What was the heart of the test? Will they live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord? He gave them the gospel. What did he do for Israel? "Not one word," said Joshua, "that he spoke he failed to bring to pass." He brought them into the land. That's what he's promised you with a perfect and complete Savior who's already overcome. Water came from rocks. Quail dropped on their doorstep.

The Lord's defending you. The Lord's with you. He's not left you alone. His wisdom is being shown all over this. Satan can't destroy you. "Simon. Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. He wants to take you, separate the wheat from the chaff. He wants to shake you. But guess what I've done for you? I've prayed for you that your faith should not fail." Dear church, Satan asks to sift you as wheat. He can't even accuse anymore. He can't even accuse. And every time the Lord prays for you, he's called your intercessor, your mediator. It's by his power you will be kept. So doesn't that give us so much perspective through all of this? The devil's the dead, dying fish in the fish bowl, swimming 100 miles an hour sideways. Well, God just told you, he soon goes into the toilet, and all this will be done. You are on the accomplished side of history. You're at the very end. That's why it's raging the way it is. That's why things look the way they do. But what it means is, he's won. The Lord's won. The blood of the Lamb has overcome and we overcome by the word of our testimony.

That's why we're doing this. That's why we're here. That's why you're listening to this. When people bring the truth of the Christ and the gospel into their hearts and minds, you're overcoming, believing that truth. So I hope that encourages you today. That was the goal. Stay with the gospel. Stay with the testimony. There we have overcome. And he promises us, as he's told us the whole way, we're going to be there. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's pray to him.

Heavenly Father, we are wonderfully thankful today for such a glorious truth that you have set before us and we see how we have to look so much deeper at the problems that we're seeing in our society. The world thinks it will overcome with its answers and the things that we're seeing unfold on the news. We see the greater problem, you've given us perspective into the greater problem. And we know that the devil spews his hate, and it's ultimately aimed at your people. We pray then, Lord, that through this we would have perspective of the victory that is ours, that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. There is no accusation anymore. Let us live in the joy of that comfort for it's a wonder and a wonderful gift that you give us to live in joy today in the midst of this turmoil. Let us be encouraged that you fight the battle for us. Let us give ourselves, then, to your testimony and to loving your commandments, and may that testimony be strong in our day so that many would see where the true power and answer lies in the cross and stay there and keep your church focused on that mission, we humbly pray. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.