***Salvation

RV157-02***

We are studying "War in Heaven." This is segment number three in Revelation 12:7-12.

**War in Heaven**

Part of God's creation which mankind cannot see is the angelic host. Some angels are the evil associates of Satan, and are known as demons. Some angels are the loyal associates of God, and they are known as the holy angels. At the midpoint of the future seven-year tribulation period, the demon angels, led by Satan, and the holy angels, led by the archangel Michael, meet in a dramatic climactic war in heaven. It is a furious battle which will take place in outer space, in which Satan and his demons will be soundly defeated. This defeat will be a great humiliation to the arrogant archenemy of God. It will be a humiliation before all of the angels, and it will devastate the morale of the demonic hosts.

**Satan**

In the second part of verse 9 of Revelation 12, we have indicated to us the consequences of this satanic defeat in this dramatic battle. Verse 9 says, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old, who is called the devil and Satan." He has all of his names given here to make it clear who it is that John is referring to: "Who deceives the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth." The word "thrown down" looks like this in the Greek language: "ballo," and it means "to be cast out."

**Cast out of Heaven**

Satan is thrown out of the third heaven, the throne room of God. As you know, now he has access to that throne room, as we see, for example, in the book of Job, where he comes in to report to God. As we shall see in the verses which follow, he comes into heaven, and sends his agent demons there in order to accuse you and me when we sin, before the throne of God. He calls attention to all of the throne room assemblage of what God's people are doing in failing to live up to their heritage as members of the royal family of God.

This "word cast" out is in the Greek past tense, which means that it is at a point of time, specifically three-and-a-half years after the tribulation begins. It's at the midpoint. It is in the passive voice, which means that this is done to him by Michael's forces. It is indicative mood, a statement of fact.

**The Three Heavens**

What happens to him is that he is thrown down to planet earth. Satan is cast down to the earth itself. Thereafter, Satan will no longer be permitted to enter the presence of God, nor even (as we shall see later on) will he be permitted to come into the first or second heavens. The presence of God (the throne room of God – the temple of God in Heaven) is called the third heaven. The atmosphere around envelope that surrounds the earth is the first heaven. That is the area in which the birds fly, and in which man operates. The outer spaces are the area of the second heaven. And as we shall see, he will be totally restricted to the earth. He will not be able to operate in the first, second, or third heavens. So, the bum will have finally been thrown out of God's heavenly house so that no one there will have to see him or listen to him again.

This expulsion of the defeated Satan will signal the first step of his journey into the lake of fire. God, at this point in time, is beginning to move against Satan, and Satan will be in a panic. He knows that this is going to be the beginning of the end for him.

**Demons are Angels**

Furthermore, the end of verse 9 says, "And his angels." This is the same word in the Greek Bible for the holy angels. The word looks like this: "aggelos." Demons are angels. Loyal angels are also angels. This word here refers to the demons who cast their lot with Satan so long ago in his rebellion against God. The demons are morally filthy creatures who hate God, and they support Satan in promoting false religions to keep people from finding their way into that narrow gate and that constricted road which leads to eternal life.

**The Angelic Conflict**

These angels fought in the angelic conflict here in heaven with the holy angels, and they lost the battle. They will then be in considerable disarray. They, too, we are told, are thrown down to the earth. They are denied further access to all of the three heavens along with Satan. They are ignominiously kicked out of heaven. You can imagine that the humiliation causes an enormous rage on their part.

So, both Satan and his demons are, at this point in time (the middle of the tribulation) denied further access to the three heavens. They are restricted entirely to planet earth, and to whatever they can do to its humanity. This is done, of course, to the one who today pretends to be good while destroying those who follow him. The reason that people who follow morally degenerate lifestyles, and call it freedom and good, is because Satan has told them that that is good. He has taught them, as a pretender of enlightenment. In fact, the New Age movement uses that very term concerning the demons who guide Satan's work as "masters of wisdom."

2 Corinthians 11:14-15, revealed this deceit on the part of Satan, where Paul says, "And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." He disguises himself as a holy angel: "Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their deeds."

**Abortion**

So (as you see from the articles on Operation Rescue), these servants (even law enforcement officers) maim and injure Christians who are standing with every legal precedent and title, as a human being, to take any action at any time that he sees another person's life threatened. When a person's life is threatened, you can overcome; you can override; and, you can overstep any law, because the mission takes precedence of preserving that life. These Christians understand that a human life is at stake in that unborn child, and that a human life is about ready to be murdered. Even when those evil men of the Supreme Court passed their horrible Roe vs. Wade decision did not deny that what was in that woman's body (what had been conceived) was a human being.

**The 14th Amendment**

Some people don't understand that. The court never denied that it was a human being. They said, "Yes, it's a human being, but it's not a person as per the 14th Amendment. The 14th Amendment calls a person somebody who's walking around on the surface of the earth. That was the basis of the decision. And for sociological reasons, the court said (meaning that this is what a lot of disoriented people from the Word of God would want), "We had made this decision: that a child who is a human being, but not yet born, is not a person. Therefore, he does not have the right to protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Satan is the one who so twists the minds of people that they can actually believe this. Some of these men have now gone out to eternity, and you can imagine what they are facing, with the slaughter of millions of young Americans that they turned loose. Can you imagine facing a holy God with that on your record? And most of them were probably unbelievers. And the Bible tells us that the extent of your sin determines the extent of your punishment. Can you imagine how every child which is aborted notches up one more step the level of punishment that these men will suffer? How could wise, intelligent, judicially-trained experts make a mistake like that? It was because Satan came along and disguised himself as an intellectual; a sophisticate; and, a good old guy who had human welfare at heart, and they believed him.

The result of Satan's deception is described for us in 1 Peter 5:8, where Peter says, "Be of sober spirit. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour." He pretends to be an angel of enlightenment and good, but he will destroy you. He deceives, and he makes fools of the smart and stupid of the human race alike. The reason he can do that is because anybody who lacks a knowledge of Bible doctrine will not be able to expose what he is doing. Only biblically trained mentalities can spot the deceptions of Satan.

At mid-tribulation, humanity will now receive Satan's full attention, as he is restricted to roaming the inhabited earth: lying; corrupting; and, destroying.

**A Pronouncement in Heaven**

In Revelation 12:10, we have a heavenly pronouncement. Here's the announcement: "And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying." John's attention is now drawn to a loud voice which comes from heaven, making a definitive, dramatic statement. This voice is not identified for us, but its heavenly source makes it authoritative. The speaker represents, in fact, a large body of believers in heaven. Therefore, he refers to them as "brethren." This is not a reference to angels who are being represented, but a reference to born-again people who have passed from this earth, and are now in heaven with the Lord.

The pronouncement is the result of Satan's permanent expulsion from heaven. So, it says, "Now," emphasizing this particular point in time. It means that Satan has been restricted now to earth. When this happens, it will signal that the end of the tribulation is near, and that Jesus Christ will soon return to bring to fruition certain things. Certain things are now in motion, but have not been completed. And once Satan is thrown out, and he's restricted to the earth, everyone who knows Scripture will know that three-and-a-half years down the line, Jesus Christ will return from heaven to bring certain things to fruition. These are named in the rest of the verse.

We are interested in directing our attention to the first one. It says, "Now the salvation." He will later add, "The power, the kingdom, and the authority of Christ." The Greek word for "salvation is "soteria." This salvation is specifically identified as being the salvation of God. The Greek Bible says, "Of *the* God, indicating that it is the salvation authored by God the Father. The Greek language also has the definite article "the" in front of the word "salvation." It is *the salvation*, indicating that there is only one valid plan for getting into heaven. There's only one way, and that valid plan is the one which has been offered by *the* God, and it is through Jesus Christ.

That is the enormity of the horror that is taking place in American life today, as we are on the verge of killing off young Americans to defend a religious system which has corrupt leaders, who are vile people, who worship a demon God called Allah, and who will not permit chaplains to wear their crosses, or for Christian soldiers to have their Bibles out in the open. When the soldiers want to have a church service, they must do it in an unobtrusive place, off in some tent, where it is not announced by the chaplains. They're forbidden to announce it so that a large crowd would attend. They can only mention it a few minutes before the service so that the word can't get out. The American government said, "Please let us put you back in power. Let us put you back on your throne. Let us make sure that your corrupt lifestyle can continue, and we Christians will be glad to die to make that possible for you, even though you tell us that Jesus Christ is not God; that He is not the only way to heaven; and, that He is not God's final voice. Yes, Hebrews says that He is, but that's a lie. Christians have written the Bible, and they have lied."

The Muslims will tell you: "Christians lie. They've written a Bible that is full of lies. If you want to find the truth, come to our prophet Muhammad. His Koran is God's truth. He is God's great prophet. He is the last voice."

You must make your decision. Either John knows what he's talking about here, and the words of Scripture (carefully chosen by God the Holy Spirit) are telling you that there is *the* salvation prepared by *the* God and it is *the* authoritative (and only) way into eternal life, or else you can go along, and be deceived by Satan – that deceiving angel of light, who created Islam, and millions of human beings have latched onto it as the truth, and they're marching lockstep into the lake of fire without realizing it.

The reason the United States is called the Great Satan by these Islamic countries is because the United States evolved out of a Christian context (out of a biblical frame of reference), and because it continues to be basically a Christian oriented nation, and because it upholds the Bible as the true Word of God rather than the Koran. It is the Bible that is the reason that the imams and the ayatollahs (the religious leaders of Islam) refer to the United States as the Great Satan. They tell us that our book is the product of Satan. Make your choice: the salvation of our God. It is the true God with the true salvation.

Also, it says, "Have come." He says, "The salvation." Then he says, "And the power, and the kingdom (all are) of our God and the authority of Christ have come." The word "have come" is the Greek word "ginomai." This word really means "to become," and here in the sense of coming to completion or fruition. Salvation for us at midpoint in the tribulation will be on the verge of coming to fruition – to be fulfilled in all of its aspects. Born-again people today now enjoy only some aspects of their salvation.

**Salvation**

The word "salvation" in the Bible denotes deliverance from all the destructive effects of sin on man and on nature. It means deliverance from spending eternity separated from God, and suffering in the lake of fire. That's what the word "salvation" means in the Bible. The word means deliverance from enslavement to the sin nature, where you cannot do anything but do wrong. The word "salvation" means deliverance from spiritual and physical death. The word "salvation" means deliverance from corruption of the world of nature around us.

1. **Justification**

For us to understand what he means by saying that our salvation has now come to completion, we have to remind ourselves that there are three phases of salvation. Phase number one of salvation is in the past, and we refer to that as the past tense of salvation. What happens there is summarized by the word "justification." The word "justification" means absolute righteousness. To be justified means that you're as perfect as God. He has imputed to you His own absolute righteousness. So, the Bible speaks of salvation as something which has been completed in the past for every believer. It is very important that you understand that God talks about salvation as something which is completed. It is not something which is going on. It is not, as Roman Catholicism says, for example, "Something that you are constantly earning, and moving into, until finally you come to the climax and end up in heaven. That is not the case.

The Bible says, "That there is a condition in your past which is permanent, and it's called salvation. In Luke 7:50, we read, "And He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'" Here the word is being used in this concept of a permanent action in the past. Her past faith is what saved her.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18, this concept is again seen: "For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God."

Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace, you have been saved." It is all completed, through faith: "And that salvation is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.

So, we have a clear statement here in the Bible of salvation as something that has been completed in the past. This past tense salvation is so absolutely perfect because it is totally and entirely the work of God such that you can never lose it. That's why you can never be lost again. It is a past action on the part of God himself.

John 5:24 says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life."

The apostle John (who wrote this book to explain to us how to get into heaven, and to assure us of having salvation) clinches it in John 10:28-29 when he quotes Jesus as saying, "And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my head. My Father, who has given them to Me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. That is a clear declaration that once you have entered the family of God, it is a new birth. As always, with births, they are irreversible.

**Positional Sanctification**

Salvation in the past tense produces for us then a position of sanctification. The word "sanctification" means "to be set apart." In our position, as far as God is concerned, we're going to go to heaven. We are forever eternally set apart. That is phase one of salvation. It is a past tense condition. To say that we have positional sanctification is to say that we are saints. 1 Corinthians 1:2 indicates that. Paul says, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus (set apart in Christ), saints by calling, with all who, in every place, call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours." This word "saints" indicates that past salvation deals with positional sanctification. You are set aside in your position to eternal life.

1 Corinthians 6:11 also says, "And such were some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God." There you see the two words: "You were justified." He is talking about the sanctity of the body, and how the Christian's body is a sacred thing to God, once you are born again, and that God has justified you by giving you absolute righteousness. Because of that absolute righteousness, you have positional sanctification; that is, you are in a position set apart eternally to spend your life in heaven.

In 1 Peter 1:2, we may add this: "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit (the setting apart work of God the Holy Spirit), that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood. May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure."

**Saints**

So, what these verses are telling us is that they are referring to being set apart. They refer to the setting apart of every believer to eternal life through the work of Christ on the cross. This is what is in the mind of the writer of the book of Hebrews in Hebrews 10:10: "By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" – set apart, once for all. So, a Christian is a saint because of his permanent position in Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 talks about being placed into Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You are not a saint because of your conduct. If we had to get the title of saint because of our conduct, we'd never make it. Anyone that the Catholic Church has beatified as a saint, and elevated as a saint, is not telling the truth. That is a person with an old sin nature, and maybe they were better than other people, but they were not a saint in the biblical sense of the word. The biblical sense of the word means that you're perfect. You're absolutely like God.

So, this position in Christ bears no relationship to the way a Christian lives. This is the same sanctification whether you're a spiritual or a carnal believer. Positional sanctification is as perfect as the Lord Jesus Christ is perfect. Positional sanctification does not mean, of course, that a person has achieved sinless perfection in his experience.

So, that is phase one of salvation.

1. **Spirituality**

Phase two of salvation has to deal with the present, as phase one dealt with the past. The present has can be summed up by the word "spirituality." Now you should know that spirituality means being filled with the Holy Spirit. A person is spiritual when he's in that inner circle of temporal fellowship. He is eternally saved (he has eternal fellowship), and now he's got temporal fellowship from the point of the cross when he is in that circle, which means that he has all known sins confessed. When he sins, he steps out of the circle. When he confesses, he comes back in. But he never leaves his outer circle. Phase two is present tense. The Bible speaks about a present salvation for the believer, and that is referred to the reigning power of sin in his daily life.

For example, Romans 6:14 talks about sin losing its control over the life of the Christian in is everyday walk: "For sin (and here, it is singular, meaning the sin nature) shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace."

**Experiential Sanctification**

In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul says, "So, then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." What he is talking about here is: "You people work out your lives day-by-day. How are you going to conduct yourself? How you are going to think? How you are going to use your talents; your time; and, your treasures." Salvation in the present tense produces another kind of sanctification that we call experiential sanctification; that is, it's the sanctification of your experience. It refers to the setting apart to God of the Christian in his daily life from the acts of sin.

This is determined by your willingness to be yielded to God; confession of sin; and, the use of the grace system of perception for developing a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. Experiential sanctification is not a matter of how you feel (your emotions), any more than how your justification or forgiveness is a matter of how you feel about it. This is a matter of what God has said. Your progress in spiritual sanctification is determined by the divine provisions that prevent us from sinning.

**What Prevents us from Sinning?**

What are those provisions? Psalm 119:11 tells us that the Word of God (the intake of doctrine into the mentality of the soul) will prevent you from sinning. We are prevented from sitting by the intercession of Jesus Christ for us in heaven. Romans 8:23, Hebrews 7:25, and 1 John 2:1 all tell us that we have someone up there who is interceding with God the Father in our behalf, to preserve us from sinning. And the third factor that enables us to have progress in our experiential sanctification is the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit who dwells us to guide us. Galatians 5:16 and Romans 8:4 tell us that He is there for us to depend upon Him, and to walk by means of Him.

**Sinless Perfection**

The Christian can never eradicate the sin nature within himself, so he can never arrive at sinlessness while he is on this earth. Yes, there are people who claim that they have arrived at sinlessness. However, the Bible is very clear that that is never true. When we say you have experiential sanctification in your daily walk, it never implies absolute perfection. In Romans 7:21, Paul says, "I find then the principle that evil is present in me (there is a sin nature in me) – me, the one who wishes to do good." So, the most sincere Christian; the most dedicated Christian; and, the most godly Christian will always find that there's a sin nature right around the corner that is waiting to pounce upon him, if you give it a chance.

This is especially clear in 1 John 2:1, where John says, "My little children, I'm writing these things to you that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is our intercessor."

Then in 1 John 1:8 we read, "If we say that we have no sin (that is, no sin nature), we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." So, to claim sinless perfection is to deny 1 John 1:8.

The spirit-filled status, of course, secures victory over the sin nature. Galatians 5:16-25 describe the kind of a person you will be if the sin nature is kept under control. That sin nature has been judged on the cross, and when it is kept under control with the Word of God, in subjection to the Spirit of God, you will be a winner. Romans 6:1-14 describe that for us.

**Spiritual Maturity is Progressive**

Experiential sanctification is related to our growth in spiritual maturity. So, we say it is progressive. Yes, you can progress in your experiential sanctification. You cannot progress in phase one, past tense, positional sanctification. That has no progress. You are at the maximum point. 2 Peter 3:18 says, "But grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." What is he talking about? He is talking about progress in your godly life, in your experiential sanctification.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul says, "But we all, with unveiled faces, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." As you look into the mirror, the Word of God, you see more and more what God is like. That glory is absorbed and reflected on you.

1. **Glorification**

Now we come to phase three of salvation, and this is the one that particularly concerns us in this session. But you have to have the other two in order to have the picture here. This is dealing with the future. It is summed up by the word "glorification." Glorification means "sinless perfection." Sinless perfection means perfect in the removal of the effects of sin. It means not only sinless perfection relative to your soul and spirit, but it also means you have a body that is resurrected (or glorified in the rapture), so that it is perfect in every respect. The effects of sin are removed.

The Bible speaks about a future salvation for believers when they will be like Jesus Christ – absolutely sinless in practice, and possessing a glorified body. Romans 8:29 refers to that: "For whom he foreknew, He also predestinated it to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." The word "foreknew" refers to the fact that God chose you for eternal life. Therefore, because He chose you, He also predestinated you to become just like Jesus Christ in your physical and spiritual structure, and that you would be like Christ so that Jesus would be just one (first in line) of a large body of humanity that is just the way He is. Now that's great. That's something you need to remember when the tough time comes – when the body breaks down and stops functioning.

1 Peter 1:5 also speaks about phase three future glorification and ultimate sanctification: "Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." This is the same thing that John is referring to when he hears his voice in heaven saying, "Salvation now is about to be completed." Peter says, "A salvation ready to be revealed in the last time;" that is, everything that is involved in salvation, you finally receive. Now this phase of salvation, as well as the first two, I remind you, depends entirely on the faithfulness of God, and not on man.

**Salvation Depends Upon God Alone**

Phase one of salvation is positional sanctification (in the past), and that doesn't depend on you. Phase two is experiential sanctification, your salvation in the present – that doesn't depend on you. And your future salvation does not depend on you either. It is entirely dependent upon God doing the job, and that's a big relief.

In Philippians 1:6, Paul says, "For I am confident of this very thing: that He who began a good work (that is, salvation) in you will perfect it until the day of Christ." "The day of Christ" is a technical phrase in the Bible. You should immediately connect that with the event of the rapture of the church. Any time you read "the day of Christ," that's the rapture of the church. He is telling us that God is going to keep you on track in your salvation to the very moment that Jesus Christ returns to take you to heaven in the event of the rapture.

**Ultimate Sanctification**

Salvation in the future then produces what we call ultimate sanctification. This is referred to in several passages. 1 John 3:1-2 is a very clear reference: "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears (Christ), we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.” This is phase three future glorification, having a perfectly sinless nature and a perfect body free of all the effects of sin, resurrected to eternal life.

**The Image of Christ**

This is the image of Christ. This is the totality of the image of Christ. This is the name of the game of all of our Christian ministries. What we do in our ministry to people is trying to give people the capacity to move toward becoming transformed into the image of Christ. We teach our children in the academy. We go through that great effort for this one purpose – to transform them into the image of Christ. We work on the social level with kids in the youth clubs for one purpose – to transform their lives into the image of Christ. The job will never be done until ultimately they come into His presence. But they do have the right to go toward that direction in considerable degree in.

In Philippians 3:21, we read, "Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory." Our bodies are breaking down with age; wracked with disease; and, threatened on every side with an immune system which, if it stops functioning, everything comes apart rapidly, and who can keep it going except the God of heaven? But someday we will have a body transformed into His glorified resurrected body, completely free of any effects of sin, disease, and death itself: "By the exertion of the power that he has, even to subject all things to Himself." And here again, we're told that this is going to be done – that God is going to do this. You may add 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 to this future tense ultimate sanctification.

So, this refers to the believer being set apart from the presence and the practice of sin in eternity. The sin nature is removed, and this is the final goal of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, "To perfect us in our spirit, soul, and body." This is ultimate sanctification. This is sinless perfection.

The salvation that John hears announced from heaven in Revelation 12 as coming to fruition is this one right here. He is referring to phase three glorification. We are about at that point to reach what we do not now have as believers. God is about to undo at that point all of the terrible consequences of sin on man and on nature. The mess that Satan has made of God's earth is about then to be cleaned up.

The apostle Paul was very interested in his ultimate salvation (phase three), and he referred to this very thing in a very marvelous passage in Romans 13:11. He gave us a sobering caution in view of a time in the very near future when we're going to get all the features to which we are entitled in. Paul says, "And this do: knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awake from sleep. For now, salvation is nearer to us than when we believed." Salvation is nearer to you now than that point in time when you said, "I trust Him as my Savior." What is he referring to? Phase three ultimate sanctification.

"And this do." When he says this, he refers back to the immediate context, calling for the exercise of the royal law of God, which James 2:8 talks about, of loving your neighbor as yourself. Paul says, "In view of this" (in view of the moral code). He talks about that in Romans 13:8-9 in the context. He says, "In view of this, there is something you should know" (something that you intuitively should understand); that is, that we are now in a certain time period. The word for "time" here is kind of important. It's the word "kairos," and the word "kairos" refers to time as an era with special significance. It does not talk about time in chronological order, such as: "It's now 10 o'clock; it's 11 o'clock; and, it's 12 o'clock." It's talking about a segment of time that has special significance.

So, Paul is saying, "Be aware of the fact, Christians, knowing that it is already the hour, or the time (that you are living in) in which Satan rules the world." This is a critical period in human history, and certainly more critical today than ever before. It's the era when Christ is in heaven, and we are on earth, awaiting His return, and Satan is running wild. It is a time that the Bible calls "this present evil age" – the end of the ages – the consummation of the ages – this present age. It is a call to consider the nature and the character of the age in which the church lives.

He says, "This is a time for Christians to wake up. It is already the time for you to awaken from your sleep." The word "awaken" is the Greek word "egeiro," and that word means simply to get up off your sack, and wake up – to remove yourself from slumber. The Greek Bible puts the word "you" in as a separate word, which says, "I'm talking to you personally, Christian." You people who don't think that you're sitting out there fast asleep while you live in this enormously important age, the age of the intensification of the angelic conflict. And when Satan loses that battle in heaven, the intensification is going to take several notches higher as all fury breaks loose upon this earth.

Paul says, "You people need to wake up." And the word "wake up" is in the infinitive mood, which expresses the purpose of God. He says, "You need to wake up from your "hupnos," and what it means is "slumber." The word here refers to lethargic, spiritually lazy, non-aggressive Christians who are yawning in the face of God who calls them to serve. It's talking about the Christian who is preoccupied with self-interest, and only incidentally preoccupied with God's work. If that describes you, I can tell you that you're sleep. You don't know what's going on. You're groggy. That's what this word "hupnos" means. Get yourself to where your senses are clear. Get some cold water on your face so that you're starting to think. You've lost track of the time that you're living in. We are living in the intensification of the angelic conflict. We are living in the final stages of humanity's self-destruction.

I'll tell you something else that being asleep includes, both literally and figuratively. It's when you don't show up for these church services on Sunday morning and Sunday night, often because you're sleep in that sack. You stay away only because you've lost track of what's going on. If you had the perspective of eternity, you wouldn't dare stay away. You wouldn't dare neglect being here, because you know that this is where it's at for you to survive in the devil's world. Those of you who think you can't be a casualty, just remember all the people we don't see any more in this congregation who have become spiritual casualties, who are once forefront of the soldiers of the Lord. It can happen to anybody. It happens because you fall asleep at the wheel. You get disoriented toward God. So, your lives are absorbed with temporal things only. It's time to start breathing in doctrine, folks, and to start exhaling some real eternal values from your life.

Paul says, "This do (all of these moral things up here in the context), knowing the time in which you live." It takes moral people, and that it is already the hour for you (long since passed) for you to wake up to what's going on. Why? He says, "For now salvation (your 'soteria' – what we've been talking about throughout this session) is nearer to us than when we believed." That means that the full privileges and results of your trust in Christ are very near. For some of you, you may have to wait a while until the rapture takes place. For some of you, it may be quicker by God taking you through death into His presence. At any particular point in the Christian's life, he is nearer to the consummation of his salvation than he was at the moment when he believed the gospel and trusted in Christ. The salvation which is daily nearer for the Christian is phase three salvation – the phase of glorification.

This is the time when Christ returns to meet His bride in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). This will be the consummation of our salvation. This is the future glorification phase that Hebrews 9:28 talks about. This is the time when God saves us from the very presence of sin.

So, you and I are to be alert to the fact that we live in a time span which is going to end very quickly with our arrival, one way or another, in the Lord's presence. Once that happens, the church-age believer will face the Judgment Seat of Christ for the evaluation of his service to God as Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 indicate. So, there's no time to be wasting in making your life count for eternity. Phase three salvation is about to happen. And once Satan is thrown out of heaven, things are going to go very quickly into motion, and it's going to happen fast. But for some of us, it may happen even quicker. There's no time to waste to store those treasures in heaven through your divine good service, because each day brings us closer to our ultimate sanctification.

Indifference toward serving God leads to wasting your life as a Christian in temporal, self-centered interests. It is time for Christians to wake up to spiritual realities, and to shake off slothfulness to God's work. Every one of us is in full-time Christian service, so don't stand around looking for other people to take up the slack.

Carnal Christians are especially in a spiritually groggy condition, so they are oblivious to the needs of the Lord's work, let alone to participating in it. Christians have to fight all the time being lulled to sleep by their marvelous material well-being, and the freedom, as Americans, to indulge themselves with their material well-being. That's the quickest way to put yourself to sleep, and you have to find it all the time.

**Rewards and Crowns**

Once a Christian meets Jesus Christ through death or the rapture, there is no more opportunity to earn rewards in heaven through your divine good works. There will only be happiness that you acted wisely, or tears and sorrow that you acted foolishly. You may count on the fact that our Lord will reward you. You may count on the fact that He cannot give you what you have not earned. He will give you rewards. He'll give you crowns. He will give you the crown of rejoicing for a life that has been spent in maximum divine good (Philippians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). He will to give you the crown of righteousness for a life where you spent maximum time in the inner circle of temporal fellowship (2 Timothy 4:7-8). He will give you a crown of life if you spent your life progressing all the way to the super grace level, and staying there (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10). And for a specialized group of pastor-teachers, there is the crown of glory. 1 Peter 5:4 describes this for those who have given people the Word that they needed to have made their lives count.

This is the ultimate divine good that God has for us. It's our ultimate salvation. It is that which is coming upon us all in the very near future. The Judgment Seat of Christ is going to be very good for those Christians who took their opportunities seriously while they walked on this earth. It's not going to be very good for those who wasted their lives, preoccupied with their own business, and never thought about doing their Father's business.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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