***Overcoming Satan

RV161-01***

We are studying Revelation 12:7-12. Our topic is "War in Heaven," and this is segment number ten.

**Biblical Prophecy**

World events have suddenly bestirred the interest of people in biblical prophecy. Last Sunday's "Dallas Morning News" had a long article dealing with subjects relevant to the antichrist; Armageddon; the rapture; and, the Second Coming of Christ. The White House has ordered several copies of pertinent current books on prophecy from the Dallas Theological Seminary book room. Television talk shows are gathering people who are knowledgeable in Bible prophecy to explain what the future holds for mankind, and how current events relate to that.

How seriously people take biblical prophecy is dependent on their view of the inerrancy of the Bible. If you take the Bible seriously, you'll take prophecy seriously. If the Bible is not taken seriously, you'll take prophecy with a considerable grain of salt. So, those who see the Bible as the true voice of God take prophecy very seriously indeed. For the Christian, the fulfillment of prophecy is very important, because it signals the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. We do not have, and cannot have, any way of identifying the point in time when Christ will remove all of us who are part of the body of Christ, the church, to meet Him in the air, and to remove us to heaven.

However, we do have considerable information in the Bible as to the condition which will exist immediately after the rapture – the world conditions moving into the tribulation era, and those pieces we see rapidly falling into place. That being the case, we may logically conclude that the rapture also is increasingly moving upon us very, very rapidly.

Upon the completion of receiving the end time prophecies of the book of the Revelation, the apostle John concluded his writing of this book by saying, "Amen. Come Lord Jesus." For those of us who believe the Bible is indeed the Word of God, and we take prophecy seriously, therefore, we too can join in with John: "Amen. Come Lord Jesus."

On the other hand, those who reject the Bible as the inerrant Word of God dismiss Bible prophecy as poetic speech or wild imaginations. One thing we may be sure of is that Satan, in our day, will step up his attacks on the truthfulness of the Bible as God's revelation concerning future events. That's the one thing among many things, especially, that Satan does not want people to take seriously what God has chosen to take us into His confidence about, concerning what He's going to do in the course of human events.

**John Shelby Spong**

The devil, therefore, will approach people in our day in an intense campaign to discredit the Bible. An example of this is a new book by the Episcopalian bishop that I spoke to you about recently, John Shelby Spong of Newark, New Jersey. He is making a big splash with a new book that he has written entitled Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism: A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture.

**Origen, and Non-Literal Interpretation**

I have noticed that when people talk about "rethinking" something in Scripture, it's usually an expression that they want to eliminate something from Scripture that they don't like. "Rethinking" means to try to get rid of it. Bishop Spong operates on the basic thesis of what was introduced into Christian thought by Origen in the third century that we told you about in previous sessions. Origen said, "You can't take the Bible literally. You have to look under the words to find the true meaning (the spiritual impact) that God has intended for you."

**Hidden Meanings**

So, Bishop Spong says, "The true meaning of Scripture is to be found beneath the literal words, by spiritually discerning intellect." He sees the literalists (the fundamentalists) who hold the Bible to be inerrant and infallible as people who destroy the value of the Bible. In his book, he repeatedly attacks the view of the Scripture as the authoritative, literally true Word of God.

So, you are not going to be among Bishop Spong's favorite people in this congregation. He has made his decision that he has an intellect and a discerning capacity to find out what God really meant, which God chose to hide under the surface of the literal words. Here are some of the conclusions of the spiritually discerning intellect of Bishop Spong on what the Bible really teaches.

**Spong's Views on the Apostle Paul**

For one thing, he says that the apostle Paul was a self-loathing, repressed homosexual who may have, in fact, been epileptic. He bases this on the fact that Paul was unmarried, and that Paul had visions. So, who would follow the teachings of a writer of Scripture who was a homosexual, an epileptic, and therefore thought he was getting messages from God, which he really wasn't? That's what Muhammad did. Muhammad was epileptic, and he got messages from God, and he wrote them down, and the resulting book is called the Koran, and only sheer madness would take it seriously.

**Spong's Views on the Virgin Birth**

Another thing that Bishop Spong has concluded by his discerning intellect, as underneath the words of Scriptures, is that the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is an unthinkable notion. He further says, "That some of the recorded teachings of Jesus are narrow-minded and vindictive. He says that the gospel of John is filled with vile anti-Semitism, because the gospel of John warns the Jews of the condemnation that will come upon them if they reject Jesus Christ as Messiah Savior.

**Spong's Views on the Resurrection and the Trinity**

The bishop says that the stories of Christ's resurrection were never meant to be taken literally. He never did rise from the dead. He says that the Bible records of the birth and resurrection of Jesus demean the Christ event. He finds little value to the doctrine in the Trinity, and he says that Jesus Christ was not sent to save fallen humanity from its sin guilt.

**Spong's Views on the Old Testament**

He further says that the Old Testament contains a vicious tribal code of ethics created by a sadistic God. The idea that God bestowed the Promised Land on the Israelites, the bishop finds to be a piece of arrogance.

Bishop Spong accuses mainline churches and fundamentalist seminaries of being more interested in maintaining their financial support than in truly understanding the Bible by reinterpreting it properly as he has.

**Spong's Views on Sex**

He believes that fundamentalists use the Scripture as a weapon of discrimination to vent their aggressions and frustrations on others. Thus they want to take the Bible literally, like against homosexuals. Anybody who takes the Bible literally is going to have a very definite view concerning the sinfulness of homosexuality.

Fundamentalism is described by the bishop as an intensely satisfying delusion which is doomed to die soon. But as I told you many times, the thing I love about the Bible, and about what it teaches, is that someday we're going to find out who's right and who's wrong. The bishop is going to find out as well, despite having a turned-around collar; having esteem; being highly respected; having a large following; and, making lots of money on selling books, or not.

Spong actually assails the supposed biblical view of Christians on sex, and asserts that non-marital sex can be holy under certain circumstances. Now, that will fill your church if anything will, for sure.

The bishop teaches that homosexuality is really not sinful. He supports homosexual marriages, and not too long ago, he indeed ordained a practicing homosexual as a pastor of a church in New Jersey.

**Spong's Views on Literal Interpretation**

"The Dallas Times Herald," February 16th, 1991 had an article on Bishop Spong. I just want to read you a little paragraph from what he had to say. This article says, "Spong wants the Bible understood in intensely subjective terms in its authorship and how it should be interpreted: 'A literal Bible presents me with far more problems than assets. It offers me a God I cannot respect, much less worship: a deity whose needs and prejudices are at least as large as my own,' he writes. Further, he says, 'I meet, in the literal understanding of the Scripture, a God who is simply not viable, and what the mind cannot believe, the heart cannot fully adore.'

So, he finds ultimate truth to be literal nonsense – things like the birth of Christ on Christmas; and the celebration of Christmas; Easter; and the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost. That's literal nonsense.

**Spong's Views on the Worthiness of Jesus Christ**

One might conclude that Bishop Spong has no use for the Bible at all in religious matters. But interestingly enough, that is not so. For the article goes on here to comment that Bishop Spong observes, "'Not to use the Scriptures as a guide. It is to dismiss our one link to this powerful figure, Jesus of Nazareth,' Spong writes, 'who may be worthy of our deepest exploration?'" Notice his qualified use of the word "may" concerning the possible worthiness of Jesus Christ.

Thus, here is a clergyman in a reputable denomination who personally has a large following who serves Satan's cause by discrediting the trustworthiness of the Bible, and thus of prophecy. This is what is increasingly going to happen in our day, and you should not be surprised to find it coming from the pulpit itself, and from religious leaders.

**Biblical Prophecy**

The Bible has told us a great deal about what God is preparing to do. The direction is very clear. The closer we come, the more pieces fit in that we don't have in the Bible, that we now find from world events, and we see how things are going to work out. The Word of God is accurate; it is infallible; and, it is true, or we have no knowledge about God whatsoever.

Satan does not want you to take seriously what is going to happen to him – what is in his immediate future. Satan's horoscope, every day that he checks it out, is bad. He hates every day. He gets a new horoscope, and it's nothing but bad. God is on his tail.

John 8:47 says, "He, who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason, you do not hear them because you are not of God." Does that describe Bishop Spong? It does to the "T." You are probably listening to a religious leader who, if he really believes all the things he has said, cannot possibly be a born-again man. He is not saved, yet he teaches people about the things of God, and he is leading them into the lake of fire. What the apostle Peter called "the sure word of prophecy, to which wise believers are to give heed," Spong calls contrived nonsense. 2 Peter 1:19: "And we have the prophetic Word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the morning star rises in your hearts."

One of the first feisty females I have had in my nearly 40-year ministry at Berean church was early on, when out of Dallas Seminary, I gave a series of instructions on prophetic matters. She was indignant. She had been a moving power in that small congregation before my arrival, and she thought it was a waste of time to study prophecy. And I asked her if she did not think it odd that the apostle Paul had spent only six weeks in the city of Thessalonica, and then wrote two letters back, reviewing what he had taught them, and guess what they were all about? Prophecy – hardcore, deep, prophetic matters. I think she's still thinking about that.

However, the world has an antagonism for prophecy when it's going to undermine their own ambitions; what they want to do in life; what they think life should be; or, they are just outright not of God, and they are antagonistic to think that God is running the show, and that God is going to bring things under control. He is running the show. He is moving things in a direction. Those who are smart will listen to what the Bible says, and observe the signs that are pointing in the right direction. Such an arrogant rejection of the inspiration of the Bible, in the face of rapidly developing confirmation in current events, is arrogance in the extreme on the part of Bishop Spong.

Please remember that biblical prophecy is the strongest evidence we have of inerrancy of the Scriptures. Nobody can make the prophecies that the Bible, makes hundreds of years for the future, and have them be fulfilled in detail perfectly every time.

Bishop Spong is in some really serious trouble, apart from the issue of his personal salvation, because the book of Revelation is the one book in the Bible that has an explicit warning to those who fool around with its content; its material; and, its teaching, who try to discredit this particular part of the Bible. You may be able to get away with a lot in discrediting other parts of the Bible, but you sure don't want to fool around trying to discredit biblical prophecy. In Revelation 22:18-19, John is led now by God the Holy Spirit, as he closes down this book to say, "I testified everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and from the holy city which are written in this book." You can imagine what a field day Bishop Spong has with the book of the Revelation.

God's advice to Bishop Spong is very clear in the Word of God, as it is to all the rest of us. 1 Thessalonians 5:20 says, "Do not despise prophetic utterances." Do not despise biblical prophecy.

In Revelation 2:29, God says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." He who has an ear open to spiritual things, pay attention. There are many people who are instructed in the Word of God who do not have an ear which is open to what the Holy Spirit has to say. We have them here, and they're to be found everywhere.

In Revelation 22:6-7, we have this piece of advice: "And He said to me, these words are faithful and true (the words of this book). And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond servants the things which must shortly take place. Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who needs the words of the prophecy of this book." Bishop's Farm would find a great deal of blessing in paying attention to the literal statements of Scripture, and to the teachings of the prophetic Scriptures as well.

In Revelation 12, we have been observing the fact that Satan has been cast out of heaven. He is now removed from any further contact with the throne room of God in the third heaven, where he has been accusing believers day and night of their sins, which have already been covered by the death of Christ, and as he does in behalf of all of us. In verse 11, we are told about how the believers respond to Satan, and how they resist the attacks on them on earth while the Lord Jesus Christ is defending them in heaven: "And they overcame him."

**The Blood of Christ**

How did they overcome Satan? First of all, because of the blood. This is referring to the physical death of Jesus Christ, and it is referring specifically to the blood of the Lamb. The Greek Bible uses this word for lamb: "arnion." This is a tender word. It is a very affectionate word. It is interesting that the Holy Spirit uses this very tender word (this very affectionate term) for the Little Lamb. This is because of the blood of the one who is so tender to us: the Lamb. This word is being used for animal sacrifices for sins. Here it is used for the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God for the sin of mankind, as found in John 1:35-36 and Revelation 1:5.

So, the blood of the Lamb is the redemptive sacrifice by Jesus Christ of Himself on the cross in payment of the divine penalty of death for the sins of all mankind. Those who are protected under this blood, as members of the family of God, are able to beat Satan, and to overcome him.

1 Peter 1:18-19 put it this way: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life, inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood as of a Lamb, unblemished and spotless: the blood of Christ." Bishop Spong says that you must look under these words and see the real meaning. The one thing he says that God does not mean is the actual physical death of Christ for your sins. He calls that nonsense.

Yet, the Word of God says, "These people (believers), specifically in the tribulation, under the attack of Satan, are able to resist and to defeat Satan because they have personal salvation. No redemption is possible by any human provision of your own. Here, Peter uses the example of buying it with money. The Roman Catholic Church hates to hear that, because they sell a lot of salvation through money. The redemption price was indeed the death of Jesus Christ as God's Lamb, carrying the sins of mankind upon Himself.

Hebrews 2:9 puts it this way: "But we do see Him, who has been made for a little while longer than the angels (namely Jesus), because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God, He might taste death for everyone."

So, Satan has been overcome by those who trust in Christ as Savior. This is based upon His atoning death. Acts 16:31 and John 3:16 make it very clear that it's trusting in Christ relative to what He has done in behalf of your sins. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, which is the ground of Satan's defeat, that nullifies all the accusations he brings against believers before the throne of God.

Victory over Satan then begins with grace salvation through Jesus Christ.

**The Word of their Testimony**

Secondly, John points out that these believers in the tribulation not only were victorious over Satan because of the blood of Christ, but also because of the Word. This Greek word for "word" is the "logos" of their testimony. This refers to the believer's proclamation of the Word of Bible doctrine. They were victorious because they knew doctrine. They personally were able to cope with their lies because they knew the Word of God. You will find that the people who are most effectively used by the Lord are those who have a maximum amount of doctrine stored in their human spirits. The Christian idiots move along in their lives to shed their tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ when they see how they've wasted their lives and lacked reward, but the people who know the Word of God are the people that God uses. They are indeed those who are under intense fire, but those are the people that Satan will bring his pressure over.

How are you going to beat him? You're going to beat him the same way the Lord Jesus Christ did as He hung on the cross. The psalmist tells us that he ran over in His mind the great and wonderful things that were going to result as the consequence of His death upon the cross. What sustained Him? In His humanity, He was sustained by doctrine in His human spirit.

So, here, it is very clear that these people out of the tribulation, which is specifically what is in mind here, had a testimony that they could proclaim based upon on their knowledge of the Word of God. They could testify to their salvation; they could testify to the grace of God; and, they could testify to victory over their sin natures. This testimony exposes the nature, the evil, and the doom of Satan. Satan tries to silence the testimony of those who know that Jesus Christ is the door – the one and only door.

**Martyrdom**

The third thing in verse 11 that carried them through was their personal martyrdom. They did not love life, even to death. The Greek word "not" there is "ou," and that is the strong negative in the Greek language: absolutely not. They did not love their life (referring to their physical life). Literally, this word refers to their breath, even as far as their death. This word refers to their physical death.

What John is told here is that these people who are rejoicing in heaven that Satan has been cast out, who have come out of the tribulation, have been martyred. They have been killed because of their testimony for Jesus Christ. Satan once held all of mankind in his grasp because of death. The fear of death was upon all the human race because people didn't know what was on the other side. People didn't know how to face it, and what the consequence would be. Now, because Christ has risen from the dead, people know that death is reversible. Until then, they weren't sure that death could be reversed. Now they know that it's reversible – and permanently reversible.

Hebrews 2:14-15 say to us, "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He (Jesus) Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death (that is, the devil), and might deliver those who, through fear of death, were subject to slavery all their lives." Death is a fearful thing in the human race today, for those who face it without Christ. I can assure you that a soldier on the field of battle who faces the possibility of having his life suddenly terminated, and who has no confidence as to what the consequences will be to him on the other side, if he faces that kind of death, is a soldier who is not at his best capacity.

When I heard that the ground war had begun last night in Kuwait, the first thing I did was stop to pray for the troops who are going into battle – that those who would be killed by the grace of God might hopefully be those who were Christians, though they are the people who most likely always survive in battle, because they have a divine viewpoint orientation that carries them through in those conditions. However, I prayed that those who were not ready to step out of this life would be preserved and given another opportunity. Indeed, I'm sure that those people are taking this issue very seriously.

These people face martyrdom because they had no fear of death. They knew where they were going. They knew that they were coming back. Yes, they would die. Yes, they would give up their lives, but their lives were going to be most certainly restored. How do they know that? Because Jesus Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection. That means that more are going to come, and they're going to be just like Him.

In John 14:9, we read, "Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How do you say now, 'Show us the Father.''"

Verse 19: "After a little while, the world will behold Me no more, but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also."

John 11:25: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me shall live even if he dies physically.'"

So, the believers of the Tribulation, knowing that their destiny was heaven, were not intimidated by Satan's threat of death from the agents of the antichrist. They proceeded to proclaim the Word of God to their generation. Martyred saints did not hold their lives more dear than their faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 2:10, we read this about them: "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days, but be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." The crown of life is the crown which is given to those who have spent maximum time in temporal fellowship. These martyred saints did not hold their lives more dear than their faithfulness to Jesus Christ. The blood of the martyrs is not a sign of Satan's victory, but of his defeat, because as they went down, they went singing the praises of God. Satan's advice to us is to avoid death by forgetting about the Word of God, and by preserving your life. That is bad advice.

In Matthew 10:38-39, we read, "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me (that is, your mission in life) is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it." There He is specifically speaking to Christians who will be rewarded. Those who use their life in the service of God have really preserved their life. They shall be rewarded. Those who waste their life in personal temporal matters have lost their lives forever.

**Stephen**

The first Christian martyr, as you know, was Steven, and he defeated Satan in his death in a very magnificently. As he was taking his final breaths, he looked toward heaven, and he declared that he was placing himself into the hands of Jesus Christ the Messiah. Now, that is dying with victory.

**John Huss**

John Huss of Bohemia took the pope at His Word and said, "Come to Constance, Germany. We will discuss these ideas that you have about getting to heaven on the basis of grace and faith in Christ alone, apart from the ministrations of the mother church. We will promise you that you may go safely back to Bohemia." He went, and he proclaimed the gospel of the grace of God as the Scriptures taught it, and the papal authorities double-crossed him; took him out to the courtyard; condemned him as a heretic; tied him to a stake; piled brush around him; and, set it on fire. And what did John Huss do? While he still had lungs that could work, before they were seared by the heat and the smoke, he shouted across that courtyard a hymn of praise. That is martyrdom in victory over Satan. Was Huss crazy? Did he not understand that he was going to lose his life at that moment? Did he not know that he was going to give up everything that he had lived for up to that point? He was not crazy.

**Where does our Courage Come from?**

Where did that courage come from, to do something like that? It came from the same place from which it comes to the people of the tribulation, and the same place from which it would come to us.

1. **The Blood of Christ**

First of all, it came from the blood of Christ. We have a personal salvation. We are in the family of God, and it's irreversible.

1. **Bible Doctrine**

Secondly, it is because they have the knowledge of doctrine so they understand what is happening in their lives, and they can counter the lies of Satan and his world with the Word of God.

1. **Love of Jesus Christ**

Thirdly, it is because they love their loyalty to Jesus Christ more than they love staying alive.

**Rejoice**

In verse 12, we come to a divine admonition: "For this reason" refers back to verse 10 about Satan being permanently expelled from God's third heaven throne room. This expulsion indicates that Satan's power of the earth is soon to end: "For this reason, rejoice." The word "rejoice: looks like this in the Greek Bible: "euphraino." "Euphraino" means "to be glad" about something – just to be out of your gourd with emotional joy and enthusiasm. The Greek Bible puts this in the present tense, which means that you are, as Christians, to do this all the time. It is middle voice which tells us that it's going to be to your benefit if you do this kind of rejoicing. Interestingly enough, it's imperative mood. It is a command of Almighty God.

"Be happy," about something. Here, these people in heaven (the saints who are in heaven at this point in time) are told to rejoice – to be enormously happy over the fact that Satan has been permanently cast out of heaven. Interestingly enough, the word for "heaven" is plural: "the heavens." This indicates that all three heavens have now been put off limits to Satan. He cannot move into God's throne any more to accuse the Saints. He cannot move out into the outer interstellar spaces where the angelic hosts move. And he cannot move in our atmosphere anymore. He is imprisoned to this very planet earth. That creates a horrible condition.

"Rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them." This is the residence of heaven, referring to: church age; tribulation; and, Old Testament saints, all who have been born-again. The people of God can find great satisfaction in Satan's eviction from the presence of God: "You who dwell in the heavens."

**The Third Heaven**

Specifically here, it is, "You who dwell in the third heaven." I paused to stress for you the reality of the third heaven: the throne room of God above the earth, where God Himself resides. 1 Kings 8:30 and Matthew 5:34 tell us that God's throne room is a real place above the earth. It is an actual place. John 14:1-3 and 2 Corinthians 12:2 tell us about an actual place that Jesus is going to take us to in which He is preparing dwelling places for us. We're told that those who enter heaven are just as righteous as Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:14).

**Heaven**

Heaven has certain characteristics. It is populated by born again people. Therefore, the Bible tells us that heaven is a place of holiness (Revelation 21:27). Heaven is a place where you can serve God (Revelation 22:3). Heaven is a place of light (Revelation 22:5). Heaven is a place where we worship God (Revelation 19:4-6). Heaven is a place to receive rewards for your service (2 Timothy 4:8). Heaven is a place where the glory of God is everywhere shining (Hebrews 2:10). Heaven is a place of fellowship, where people are on good terms with one another (Revelation 21:3). Heaven is a place of comfort because it is a place where there's no more death; no more sorrow; no more tears; and, no more pain (Revelation 21:4). In heaven is to be found the water of eternal life (Revelation 21:6). In heaven, you will be surrounded by the children of God the Father (Revelation 21:7).

**Hell**

However, just as heaven is a reality which is referred to here for you people who will dwell in such a place, I must also remind you that hell is a place of great reality. The Jehovah's Witnesses will recoil at such an idea. The Jehovah's Witnesses, under their master Satan, will tell you there's no place like hell, and you don't have to worry about it. A lady came knocking on my door a few months ago. She wanted to give me a testimony. She was a Jehovah's Witness. I told her that I didn't have time to speak to her, because I knew what she would say to me, but I said to her, "Let me give you this, that you might find interesting to read," because she had her literature in her hand that she was giving me, and which I took. I said, "I'll take this, and let me give you this." It was our brochure "Heaven or Hell, Which Will it be for you?" You would think I had held out a cobra to her. She recoiled. She backed off and she said, "No, I can't take that.” Do you know what she was recoiling from? The word "hell."

Another Jehovah's Witness looked at that brochure on another occasion, and said, "Well, your title is wrong. There is no hell." That's the same thing that the priest almost implied in Czestochowa at the Church of the Black Madonna last summer in Poland when he picked up that brochure that I gave him and said, "Let me tell you a joke. I'm not going to heaven or hell. I'm going to purgatory."

Well, I want to tell you that hell is just a real place is heaven, and those who make light of it are the greatest fools on the face of the earth. There's a certain bravado by people who do not think that hell is real, or who do not care about the things of God. And they talk about meeting each other in hell, like it's going to be a big class reunion, and like it's going to be a lot of fun. Every now and then, there's some nut on the field of battle, leading men in battle, and saying, "Let's go. I'll see you in hell." Or some cowboy goes to a shootout, and that's his rallying cry (his battle cry).

I want to tell you something about hell. Hell is a very real place, as was evidenced by the residents of the unsaved man in the historical account of Lazarus and the rich man. In Luke 16:20-23, hell was there. Hell is an actual place in which all unbelievers must reside (Revelation 20:15, Matthew 25:41, Revelation 21:8). All of these verses make that explicitly clear. It's an actual place. Of course, when we use the word "hell," we're using it as it is sometimes translated, and how we commonly speak of it, though I do know that the Bible calls it the lake of fire.

**Characteristics of Hell**

There are certain characteristics of health. First of all, it's going to be filled with Rejecters of Jesus Christ the Savior (John 3:36). Hell is going to be a place of torment in flames without any relief. Luke 16:24 and Revelation 20:10 indicate that there is no relief from the pain that a person experiences in hell. When you're in a hell that's filled with fellow Christ rejecters, I can assure you that they're not going to be in a party mood at all, and they're not going to be much fun to be with.

Hell is going to be a place where you have a memory of having rejected divine viewpoint truth (Luke 16:25). One of the most painful things for the rich man was that he remembered the things he was told about God, and that he gave the back of his hand to, and now he can't do anything about it. His memory came in with him.

Hell is a place of permanent separation from God, the loving Creator (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, Matthew 7:23). It is permanent separation from the God who made you.

Hell is a place where it's not bad enough that you'll be surrounded by other unbelievers. Even worse, you'll be surrounded by Satan and his demons. Matthew 25:41 tells us that hell was explicitly created by God for Satan and his angels, and for all human beings who chose to reject a Savior in Christ.

Hell is going to be a place where you'll be forever burdened with unsatisfied lusts of the old sin nature. John 8:24 tells us that the old sin nature naturally goes into hell with you, and there you are, burning in all of those sinful desires, and there's no way to satisfy them. In hell, there will never be a moment of peace (Isaiah 57:21, Revelation 14:11).

As heaven was a place of light, so hell will be a place of darkness (Jude 6-13, 2 Peter 2:17). Can you imagine what it is like to feel the flames of pain of a fire and brimstone environment, and to find yourself in total darkness, and you sit there night and day forever, and you are conscious? Mark 9:48 says that the people (the unbeliever) in hell remains forever conscious. This is why Satan has taught the Jehovah's Witnesses the false doctrine of extermination. Jehovah's Witnesses say, "You don't have to worry if you miss it. God's going to rub you out of existence, and you won't know what's happening. Thus, there is no place of suffering.

You will remain spiritually dead forever in hell (Revelation 20:14). You will never be able to come to spiritual life. Hell, in short, is a horrible place to be in forever (Matthew 18:8-9, Hebrews 10:26-31). In those passages, Jesus said, "It would be better, if it's necessary, even, as an example (He didn't mean for you to mutilate yourself), if you lost an arm or you lost an eye, so that you didn't have everything physically in this life." If that would keep you from going into hell, it would be better to give up part of your body, because Jesus said that hell is a place that is so horrible that you cannot imagine how terrible it is.

You who dwell in heaven are going to be in a real place. You end up in hell are going to be in a real place.

**Satan's Wrath**

For those of you who dwell in heaven, God calls out, "Rejoice." Then he gives another admonition: "Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he is only a short time." The devil is a cornered, raging animal. He knows Bible prophecy so well. He knows exactly what is going to happen. God has cast him out at the mid-tribulation point. He knows there's only three-and-a-half years for him to try to unseat God and to defeat God. His wrath is going to be enormous. The word "wrath" is this particular Greek word "thumos." This word connotes a feeling of great agitation. We'd say "hopping mad." Satan is now in a rage. His outbursts of indignation is a fury as the result of having been defeated by Michael and his angels in the battle. Now, all of us stand there and see him taken by the scruff of the neck by Gabriel, and pitched out of heaven, and the door slammed, and he is told, 'Don't come back."

He comes tumbling down through the interstellar spaces, and he comes through our atmosphere, and he lands on this earth, and he finds that he can't go up. He tries to use his power now to rise, and he can't get off the earth. He, who once was the god of the air cannot move around anymore. He realizes what God is doing. He's beginning to close the doors down on him, until at the end of the tribulation, he's cast into the abyss for 1,000 years, before he's ultimately placed into the lake of fire.

He's in great wrath, and John says that he knows the reason for it, because he knows something. This is the Greek word "oida." This is not "ginosko" which is another Greek word for "know." This is knowing by information. "Ginosko" means that you learn something by your experience – by doing it. He's got the information. Where did he get it? He got it from the same place you and I get it: out of the Bible. He knows the Word of God. He has the information, and he knows something that is going to happen to him. What is it? It is that he now has a short time. Specifically, he has three-and-a-half years left, and then it's all going to close down around his ears.

What's going to happen at the end of that three-and-a-half years? Revelation 21:1-3: "And I saw a new heaven and earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away. There was no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men. He shall dwell among them. They shall be his people, and God Himself shall be among them.'" This is the great removal of all grief and of all agony, and along with it comes the removal of this one who has caused their grief and the agony.

Revelation 20:1-3: "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years; threw him into the abyss; shut it up; and, sealed it over so that he could not deceive the nations any longer until the 1,000 years were completed. After these things, he must be released for a short time." He will have one final rebellion, and then he goes into the lake of fire.

So, he knows that his time on earth is limited. He's a cornered, snarling, slashing animal. In three-and-a-half years, it will all be over. So, he moves quickly to organize mankind and the rulers of the world into a great army to go all-out in a war against God. The devil will mount an all-time great persecution against the people of God. His objective is to destroy them as a race. Matthew 24:15-22 describes that ultimate Jewish persecution. The antichrist will go on a murderous rampage against all born-again people. The primary motivation now will be to follow a scorched earth policy. Those who are Satan's agents always follow a scorched earth policy when they see that they are doomed; that they are cornered; and, that they are done for.

When Hitler saw that the war was lost, he ordered Albert Speer to send the word out to burn everything in Germany as the German army retreated. Albert Speer, who always did what Hitler told him, that great architects, that very gifted man, could not get himself to do that to the German people. On the last day that he spoke with Hitler in the bunker before Hitler shot himself, he said, "I must tell you, I disobeyed your order. I did not give the order for a scorched earth policy." Hitler said, "We'll talk about that tomorrow," and there never was a tomorrow for him.

But the people motivated by Satan, when they are finally frustrated, do what their master Satan does. They go for a scorched earth policy of vengeance. This is what Satan will be motivated to do. He is so vile and he is so evil that nothing will stop him from exercising his hatred toward God. At this point in time, there's no question in the devil's mind that he will be defeated by God. What he does at that point, now limited to the earth, we will look at next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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