



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 19:17-20:3

"The Great Supper and the Binding of Satan"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are coming to that part of the apocalypse that contains both very interesting and very difficult things. And next Sunday, the Lord willing, the exposition will be of chapter 20, verse 4 through verse 6 and the question that comes to mind when one looks at that passage, of course, is will there be a millennial kingdom upon the earth? And we will deal with that question, or try to deal with it, next Sunday.

Today our topic is "The Great Supper and the Binding of Satan," and we're reading chapter 19, verse 17 through chapter 20 and verse 3. So if you have your New Testaments or Bibles turn with me to chapter 19 and verse 17 and we'll read through chapter 20 and verse 3. The apostle writes,

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid heaven, 'Come assemble for the great supper of God in order that you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of commanders, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free men and slaves, and small and great.' And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse and

against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (And the original text, incidentally, the participle translated "alive" here is thrown forward in the clause for a great deal of emphasis. And so literally it says something like alive they were thrown into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.) And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. 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 a thousand years; and threw him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed. After these things he must be released for a short time."

And I think it's important for you to note as you read that verse 3 of chapter 20 that little word "must". In other words, the apostle does not write after these things "he shall be" or "will be" released, but rather "he must be released".

Now that verb is a verb that points to logical necessity. There are several different verbs in the New Testament that speak of necessity but this is one that speaks of logical necessity. And so what John writes then is that he for logical reasons, that is biblically logical reasons, he must be released for a short time. We'll say something about that later on in the message.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are indeed grateful to Thee for the privilege of opening the Scriptures and looking at the revelation that Thou hast given to us through the Apostle John. We thank Thee for the way in which it speaks to us of the providential purpose of God by which we who have believed in Christ are saved and by which also the affairs of this earth are governed.

We thank Thee Lord that this great book gives us the confidence that this universe which Thou has created is under divine control and therefore the things that happen are things that happen within Thy will. We pray that we may be responsive to the truth of God and that we by Thy grace may be able in the situation in which we are found to glorify Thy name.

We thank Thee most of all for him who loved us and gave himself for us and through whom we have eternal life. We thank Thee for the marvelous privilege of proclaiming our Lord Jesus Christ as the savior of Jews and gentiles over the face of this globe. We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon the whole church of Jesus Christ. Not simply this local body of believers but the whole body wherever today they may be. We pray for other churches in this city who preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bless them and may there be responsiveness to the message wherever it goes forth according to Thy Word.

We pray for the sick. We ask Thy blessing upon them and those who have requested our prayers particularly. Lord we bring them before Thee and ask that Thou alt minister to them in a way that will glorify Thy name and be for their ultimate and eternal good.

We thank Thee for this country. We ask Thy blessing upon our President and upon all of those who serve in the government. We pray that Thou alt give wisdom and guidance to them. Preserve this nation as a place where we are free to proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask Thy blessing upon the chapel, its leadership, upon its elders. Give wisdom and guidance to them as they exercise oversight over us. We pray for the deacons, as they serve Thee, and for every member and friend and visitor present in our meeting today. May this be a time in which we enjoy genuine Christian fellowship, not only with one another but with Thee through the word of God and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank Thee for the Lord's Day. We pray Thy blessing upon the meeting this evening as we remember him around the Lord's Table. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today as we turn to the exposition of the Book of Revelation is "The Great Supper and the Binding of Satan." The focus of this particular part of the Book of Revelation, as you well know if you've been reading it along with me, is upon the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus. Or we'll call it the Revelation in the sense that at the Second Advent he has revealed to be the Son of God.

Now the emphasis rests there as over against the rapture of believers. In the one that is the rapture God's people meet him the clouds, and the other the Revelation they come with him to the earth. In the one they experience resurrection and in the other they experience the manifestation that belongs to those who are associated with him. In the one immortality and incorruptibility are put on, and in the other they are displayed in glory.

The events that we are looking at we have suggested last week are seven fold, beginning with the Second Advent often called by biblical expositors "The Seven Last Things" and they take us from chapter 19, verse 11 and the account of the Second Advent all the way through the Book of the Revelation the last of which being the new heavens and the new earth.

Now we are looking at two of them which are really the second and third of the Seven Last Things, The Great Supper and the Binding of Satan. But you will notice in the

passage that we've read that there are three visions. Two of the visions affect that second last thing and then the third vision has to do with the binding of Satan. Notice the 17th verse says, "And I saw", and then in verse 19 again, "And I saw"; two visions. And then in chapter 20, verse 1, "And I saw". This series of "and I saw's" become very important for the relationship between the Second Advent and the kingdom of God upon the earth. And I want you to notice them because next Sunday we'll deal a little bit more in detail with what that may connote these visions that appear in the last part of this book.

Now we're turning first of all to the invitation to the Great Supper of God, which is described for us in the first vision, verses 17 and 18. And if you are a good reader of the Bible you will recognize that the language here, as is so often the case in the Book of Revelation, in this case it is drawn from the Book of Ezekiel. Very few people read the Book of Ezekiel very often and I fall into that category too because I ought to read it much more often than I do. So we're not too familiar with the language of Ezekiel but if you were familiar you would recognize that these verses now are verses in which the language is borrowed from Ezekiel chapter 39, verse 17 through verse 20 which describes the slaughter of Gog's forces in the last days.

The apostle writes, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun." One might ask the question, why is he standing in the sun? I do not know the answer to all of these types of questions that come to my mind when I read this book. I'm sure you have other questions too, but perhaps the reason that the vision is presented in this way is to bring out the truth that the angel, being identified with heaven, is unreachable by the rebellious, wicked, earthly kings. And so the angel that is seen is an angel who stands in the sun.

Well, at any rate, he cries out "With a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid heaven." Now it's evident from the command that is given to them that he is thinking specifically of the scavengers. You may remember the words of our Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 24 that, "Where the carcasses are, there the vultures will be." So we are talking about birds that are scavenging birds.

So the angel says, "To all the birds which fly in mid heave, come assemble for the great supper of God." What an interesting expression that is because we've just had the supper of the lamb. And here in the same chapter, after having the supper of the lamb. We read this, remember, in verse 9, The Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Now we have the great supper of God. But the great supper of God is not a supper in which we enjoy relationship to the Lord God. The great supper of God is a supper of judgment. It's not a supper of joy.

Men tend to think of God only in terms of comforting and consoling, of seeking and saving, of loving and pardoning, but in the Bible it is overlooked that in passages in the Bible God is presented as laughing and judging. And particularly does that come to our minds in the Book of Revelation because the second psalm where that is precisely the attitude of God toward the kings of the earth who rise up in rebellion against him, that psalm is a psalm that the author of this book uses quite a bit in the language of this book. And the thought of it also is found in the book as well. So what we are thinking about here is a God who laughs and judges and who exercises judgment.

Some years ago I was quite close to Dr. Northcote Deck, I used to see him quite frequently. He was a missionary to the Solomon Islands, and actually his family had founded the South Sea Evangelical Mission. And Dr. Deck labored for many years in the Solomon's, did his evangelizing on a boat, generally, traveling around the various islands. And he would arrive and preach and teach the word of God over a number of weeks in particular places. And one time mentioning the fact that in the islands there they spoke a kind of English that was called Pidgin English. He said one of the terms that they had for the Lord God was "big fella master too much who boss both heaven and ground." What a magnificent title for God, "big fella master too much who boss both heaven and ground".

Well, this big fella master too much who bosses both heaven and ground is going to exercise judgment one of these days. And this great supper of God is designed to present them. The Bible in the New Testament, even, is filled with the idea of supper.

For example, the Lord Jesus in Luke chapter 14 tells a parable of a great supper and as you read that in the context it becomes evident, I think, that the point of the great supper has to do with the kingdom of God.

Now we have the Lord's Supper, which we celebrate, for example, in Believers Chapel every Sunday evening. One of the great experiences of Christians. One of the things that our Lord has encouraged us to do frequently. Telling us that, as so often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you do proclaim the Lord's death till he comes. He's asked us to remember him and he has spoken those terms in the present tense, suggesting that ideally we should often remember him. We don't want to make things that are false out of ordinances but we do not want to omit the things that are important. So we observe the Lord's Supper and we call it the Lord's Supper. And there we exercise or enjoy communion with God and with other believers who are also related to the Lord God.

In this very chapter we had the married supper of the lamb. And there it is presented as something of the fulfillment of the hopes of believers. And we look forward to the enjoyment of The Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But this supper described in the verses that we are looking at is a supper of judgment. It is the supper of the judgment of God upon the kings and the significant men of the earth who are rebellious toward the plans and purposes of God.

So the word goes out from the angel standing in the sun to,

"Assemble for the great supper of God in order that you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of commanders, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free men and slaves, and small and great."

A rather universal supper of judgment. Now in the 19th verse the apostle goes on to describe the prelude to the supper. He says, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse and against His army." It's almost as if having looked at the angel in the sun and having heard the call that the angel cried out, now he looks down upon the earth and sees the beast and the rebellious kings of the earth and their armies. In the language of the Book of Revelation it's, "The beast and the horns of the beast," for the horns, remember as we studied chapter 13 for example, the horns represent kings and kingdoms.

So, "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, assembled to make war against him who sat upon the horse and against His army." Strong delusion rests upon them now as the apostle has written in another of the eschatological epistles of the New Testament in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 8 he writes, "And then that lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming." That is the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but to pleasure in wickedness. In other words, there is a special deluding influence that the kings of the earth and others who reject the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ find falling upon them in those days that just precede the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus.

Now you know it is strong delusion of you reflect upon the fact that these are just ordinary mortals, such as you and I are, though men of influence and men of power, and these ordinary mortals, the beast and the horns, are setting themselves against the lamb of God or the Lord God from Heaven. One has to be experiencing strong delusion to think

for one moment that he can survive in a struggle with the Lamb of God, eternal Son. Oh, the utter depravity of the human heart, one sees another illustration of it here.

Now putting it in the language of those who read prophecy and study prophecy, this is the great event in which our Lord finally overcomes the opposition to kingdom of God up on the earth. And so the Western confederacy, the Northern confederacy, the Eastern confederacy, the Southern confederacies; all of the confederacies in the in battle over the land are gathered here and here our Lord destroys them preparatory to the establishment of his kingdom.

Many of you no doubt if you've been around evangelicalism have heard a sermon on Joel chapter 3 and verse 14 in which for evangelistic purposes the evangelist has cited the text, "Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision," a reference to Armageddon. When this particular text is taken by evangelists, often the multitudes are those who are sitting in a tabernacle, which may have many hundreds or thousands of seats, the decision that is supposed to be made there is one that they are to make for Jesus Christ, either for him or against him. And my old Bible teacher used to say with reference to that, he said, "Such preaching is the use of a text for a pretext and is to distort and render meaningless the word of God."

The multitudes in the valley of decision, according to the Book of Joel, are the nations at the time of the judgment, of which we are looking at here. The valley is that of Armageddon where the scene takes place. They are not there to make a decision, they are there to listen to a decision that the Lord God has already made. And so consequently it's the duty of the judge and the privilege of the judge to administer the decision that he has already made and they are simply to hear it. The Supreme Court of the United States on Monday mornings holds a public audience in which they render their judgment as a result of the cases that have been brought to them in which they have taken. Well, in the future, the Lord Jesus Christ as the chief justice of all the universe at his Second Advent

will render judgment. He'll hold court for the nations, for the kings of the earth, he will render judgment and there will be no appeal for there is no court higher than his court.

So we read they were assembled and then we read in the 20th verse, "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet." In fact, we like to speak of this as the time when the battle of Armageddon takes place but it begins to look as if the battle of Armageddon is no real battle at all. But the sovereign God seizes the beast and the false prophet and the armies of those that are identified with them and the war comes to an end with the divine judgment.

So he was seized. And we read in verse 21, "And the rest were slain with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh." It no doubt in your case, as at least in mine, maybe you're somewhat like I am, when I read some of these things in the word of God in the prophets and in the Book of Revelation I find myself saying to myself, and it's not my better self, can such a thing really transpire in our society? We don't seem to be really experiencing anything that is like this and so the natural response of the human heart is to doubt. But then there are ways in which God impresses upon us the fact that it is well within his power to accomplish precisely what is set forth here. We have seen Hugo and the hurricane that hit the South Carolina coast. We have seen the earthquake that shook San Francisco. We have seen other natural disasters, which are just little indications of what is to come. And it impresses itself upon you that what we read in the Bible is very, very credible.

One of the things that disturbs us is the fact that this is divine judgment and men hate the thought of judgment. Sin is sweet to them and therefore the sword of the Lord God is bitter for them, like King Agag. Its prophets and preachers who are in our many, many liberal churches over the face of this land simpler to their Scripture ignorant heroes surely the bitterness of death is past, God is a God of love and everything will ultimately turn out alright. Universalism is the doctrine of the day that sooner or later we all shall be

saved. When Agag said to Samuel, "Surely the bitterness of death is past," you may remember the reason he said that was that God had told Saul when he conquered the Amalekites that he was to slay King Agag. Well they captured Agag. In fact, the term Agag may be a name for something like pharaoh. So when they captured the pharaoh, or the czar, the kaiser, Saul did not put him to death. And so Samuel came along and the very next verse we read, and listen to this, this is God's Prophet Samuel, and we read that "Samuel hewed in pieces Agag before Jehovah in Gilgal." That will give you an insight into the character of God that we have overlooked, that he is a God of justice and righteousness as well as, and he surely is, a God of love.

The false prophets of this hour, as someone has put it, all the shallow advanced college professors, the wicked well poisoning modernist hoard of lying preachers and others content to sit in cushioned pews and pay fawning support to a puppet to preach in inanities that never reach man's consciousness, yes all the false prophets who cry, "Peace! Peace!" when God warns of the swiftly coming day of wrath, and all the Satan drugged hosts of Christian dome content to harken to them and lie down to sleep on the edge of the volcano of destruction let them read such Scriptures as these. But they will not. In the present day, so this author says, Jeremiah 5:30 and 31 is realized before our eyes. He writes,

"A wonderful and horrible thing has come to pass on the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will you do in the end thereof?"

Now finally in verse 1 through verse 3 of chapter 20 the apostle gives us the postlude to the supper and it's the binding of Satan, we read. And incidentally back in chapter 12 in verse 9 remember in the vision that was given there to the apostle, Satan was cast out of heaven. Now here he must be cast out of the earth and he is to be put

into the abyss. This is the third member of the infernal trinity; Satan, the beast, and the false prophet. Very striking, isn't it, the way that the infernal trinity compares to the eternal Trinity. Satan as over against the Father, the beast as over against the Messiah, the Anti-Christ over against the Christ, and then the false prophet, the one who calls upon men to worship the beast over against the Holy Spirit.

So we have an infernal God and an Anti-Christ and also an unholy spirit. And God deals with that that is opposed to him very drastically. We read, "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand." And one cannot help but note the irony of that expression "I saw an angel". You notice it's not "the angel", it's "an angel". It's almost as if you'd say "a simple angel", just an angel. But who is the one who is being bound? It's the dragon. It's Satan. It's the one who is Lucifer. It's the one who is the Son of the Mourning. It's the one who is the head of the angelic host, the most glorious of the angelic hosts. But now, as a result of rebellion, a simple angel comes down from heaven having the key of the abyss and a great chain upon his hand.

You know in Isaiah chapter 14 where we may have some typical indications of what is happening in the history of Satan when it happens and when the Lucifer, the Son of the Mourning is cast into the abyss there, there is a song that is sung by the people of the land to the effect "you once were something but now look at you". Well, if there is such a song to be sung here is the time in which it may be sung.

A great chain in his hand, this has caused a problem for some because they wonder how is it possible for a chain to have anything to do with the keeping of a spiritual being under control. And so consequently you will have people say, "I don't understand how a chain of iron can bind Satan himself. But of course the text does not say a chain of iron. It says simply a chain of iron. You notice I have trouble pronouncing iron. I told my congregation that often and incidentally the last time I mentioned that and the audience when I went down on the floor here a lady came up to

me with here husband and said, "We are visiting here and we enjoyed being here and we wanted to come here," they were from out of town, and she said, "Incidentally I teach speech," [Laughter], "And I'd like to tell you how to pronounce iron." And she said, "You should pronounce it iron." And I'm sure she emphasized it but I still haven't caught it yet, 'iron' is what I say.

Anyway, you understand someone might say, "Do you really believe that Satan will be bound with an iron chain? Well, there's not a word said about an iron chain here, it says simple "chain". We read in other places about chains in the New Testament. We read of individuals reserved for future Dutchmen under chains of darkness, for example. And everlasting chains, in 2 Peter chapter 2, and also the Epistle of Jude.

So what is the nature of the chain? We don't really know. But we know this, it is sufficient to bind Satan for a thousand years because it has the authority of the eternal God behind it. And that is a clue to us, I think, as to how we should read the Bible. In other words, when we come to things then in the Bible that are difficult for us to understand, the proper approach is not to doubt them but rather to believe them and then ask the Lord God through the Holy Spirit to explain to us the things that are in the Scriptures.

Many things will come clear to you as you learn more about the word of God. And that is true in almost any experience of life. When you are learning anything there are things that your instructor will say to you that you do not understand. Now, you do not, if you're learning some profession for example, you do not doubt but you hear the professor say, "You don't understand this right now but you will understand that later on," and your experience is if you grow in what you are seeking to learn then you have that experience. And you will be saying, "Now I understand this," or, "Now I understand that." The same thing is true in biblical things. It behooves us to believe where we cannot understand and to expect God to give us understanding. And that he generally does, he gives us understanding. There are a few things he hasn't given me understanding of yet

but I'm still alive and if I do not come to understand them while I am alive in this body I expect to come to understand them in heaven. I don't think that our training in divine things stops when we die. In fact, we become much better able to understand, and therefore comprehend the things that lie with in the mind and counsel of the Lord God.

In fact, so great are the things that we shall learn that when we get to heaven we will discover that the infinite God is truly infinite and we shall never fully know him but enjoy the ages upon ages of coming to know him better and to enjoy the kind of fellowship with him that we were created for in the beginning. An angel with a great chain and he binds the dragon for a thousand years.

I have a Bible teacher friend who likes to refer to this as the most sensational arrest in all history. More sensational than the arrest of John Dillinger in the thirties, this is for you who lived in the thirties, more sensation than the arrest of Baby Face Floyd, more sensational than the arrest of Lee Oswald, more sensational than the arrest of James Earl Ray, more sensational than the arrest of Manuel Noriega, and more sensational than the other arrests that no doubt lie before us in the future.

Well, the angel lays hold of the dragon and throws him into the abyss. Now the abyss is related to the lake of fire as the county jail is to the penitentiary, just for the sake of an illustration. It's a temporary place for the dragon. He will be ultimately confined to the lake of fire.

Now here we have some interesting things to bear in mind. Because he threw him into the abyss and there he is to be bound for a thousand years that he should not deceive the nations any longer until those thousand years are completed. It's very interesting the things that interpreters have said about this. Historical interpreters have sometimes referred the binding of Satan to the crowing of Charlemagne, as the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. That crowing took place about 800 A.D. Amillenarians say that the binding took place when Christ died on the cross and that we are living in the age between the two comings of our Lord in which Satan is bound.

Now that's astonishing news to a lot of people that Satan is now bound. But now I must be fair to them because what they mean by that, is that he does not deceive the nations as he did before and that therefore the gospel is able to go out to the gentiles today. I would suggest to you that the reason the gospel goes out to the gentiles is not because Satan is bound today, but because God in his sovereign determination determined that the Apostle Paul should be the apostle to the gentiles and called him to that particular task. But at any rate, it's very difficult to see how it's possible for Satan to be bound for a thousand years in the abyss so that the nations are no longer deceived by him in the light of the statement that the Apostle Paul makes in 2 Corinthians chapter 4. Because in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 in verse 3 and 4 we read,

"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

And so the Apostle Paul says, "The reason that men do not respond is because they are subject to the blinding activity of the god of this age." Who, of course, all agree, is a reference to Satan. So it seems very difficult to believe as Amillenarians like to suggest to us that today is the day of Satan's binding. I will say this, it is true to say that in one sense Satan is bound. The one sense is the sense that when our Lord died on the Cross at Calvary there he paid the penalty of human sin and human sin is the means by which Satan holds us within his power.

So in that sense the ground of the freedom that we shall ultimately have was established in the blood that was shed on Calvary's Cross. But Satan is still free. Peter says he goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. And so the victory that our Lord has won is a positional victory and it is not yet a completed victory as the apostle in Romans chapter 16 points out in just a brief reference, I believe it's about verse

20, yes. "And the God of peace," he says, "will soon crush Satan under your feet," but at the present time Satan is quite free.

Now I know that there are many of you in this audience, you didn't have to have me tell you that because you already knew that Satan was free because you have experienced some of the difficulties that we do with him. Isaiah said, "Dust shall be the serpent's meat." Dust is the serpent's meat throughout all the centuries and dust shall be his meat during the time of the thousand year reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But now we read he must be released for a short time. What an interesting statement that is. He must be released, not he shall be released, but he must be released. In other words there is some logical reason for the release of Satan. Sometimes people come to those who are premillennialists, as I am, and they say to me, I do not see any reason for a millennium. If we have our Lord's Second Advent, the cross has taken place, the ground of the forgiveness of sins and a wall that God does has been established in the cross, and now he comes at the Second Advent and he exercises judgment upon those who oppose him, why should we not then go immediately into the new heavens and the new earth, I just do not see the reason for a thousand year kingdom of God upon the earth?

Well it seems to me that we have one of the indications of an answer right here. There are more that I will mention next week but what I see from this "must be released" is that the millennium affords an important clue to God's philosophy of history. After all, the covenantal promises that were made in the Old Testament were made upon this earth in history. Our Lord Jesus Christ came and suffered in history that the covenantal promises may ultimately be the possession of those for whom God has designed them, purposed them. How fitting, it seems to me, that upon the earth where sin first took place where the cross has taken place that there should be, at the same time, a kingdom of God upon the earth. And these promises of the mediatorial kingdom seen in their fruition in the society in which sin and the cross took place.

So to my mind it makes excellent sense to have a kingdom of God upon the earth. And further more, the very fact that we may read in verse 7, "And when the thousand years are completed Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth," is an indication of the fact that man's sin is rebellion against the Lord God and not simply deception. "No devil made me do it then," when Satan is in the abyss, one cannot use that kind of an excuse and the fact that Satan may be released and then raise up a rebellion against the Lord God after a thousand years of our Lord's reign is a testimony to the wickedness that is inherent in the human heart as a result of the fall in the Garden of Eden. We'll say more about that next week but at least I hope that you can see that there is some sense, some reason, for a millennial kingdom upon the earth.

Let me conclude, for our time has come to an end, what this passage teaches us fundamentally is that the wages of sin is death, therefore it's important that we recognize our sin. This is one of the great purposes and the secret to understanding the grace of God is to understand our sin. If we understand fully our sin then we will understand something of the greatness of God's grace. The more fully you appreciate the fact that we are unable as a result of our sin to please God the more you will rejoice in what God has done to unable people, making them able by grace to turn to him and receive, as a free gift, the forgiveness of sins.

We so often refuse to see the light. I read of a cartoon in which two ladies were present and there was an eye test that eye physicians give in order to test your eye sight. And one of the ladies said to the other one, "What in the world are you doing?" And she said, "Well, I'm memorizing this eye exam so that when I have my exam I'll be able to give the letters in the way in which they are written." That sounds so silly.

Yesterday I picked up a mail order catalogue that came to us and in the mail order catalogue there was an interesting article in which I was encouraged to buy a sleek, discreet detector, radar detector, that spots instant on radar with spectacular sensitivity at

three hundred dollars. But this is what interested me about it, it evens the odds against covert police speed traps. [Laughter] It evens the odds. In other words, you buy a radar detector in order to speed without any danger of getting caught for your speeding. In other words, you buy the radar detector in order to persist in your lawlessness. So true to human nature, that's what we do.

Now, I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand how many of you have a radar detector [Laughter], I just want you to understand the philosophy that lies back of having that radar detector. Now it's not all that serious, of course, but nevertheless the principal is really there. And that is the way we frequently react to the things of the word of God.

Arthur Schlesinger, who is not so far as I know ever attended a church where the gospel is preached as it is in evangelical churches. In one of his articles several years ago makes these statements, he says, "There seems no inherent obstacle to the gradual advance of socialism in the United States through a series of New Deals. Official Liberalism was the product of the Enlightenment crossed fertilized with such things as science, booshwa complacency, and a belief in progress. It," now listen to this, this is what I cited this for, "dispensed with the absurd Christian myth of sin and damnation and believed that what shortcomings men might have were to be redeemed, not by Jesus on the cross, but by the benevolent unfolding of history." The benevolent unfolding of history? A redeemer? The benevolent unfolding of history? One truly has to be blind to think that we have in the unfolding of human history benevolence. We have anything but benevolence in the unfolding of history. We have the unfolding of the wicked nature of the human heart down through the centuries and in the individual lives of individuals outside of Christ. One finds not the benevolent unfolding of your history but the precise object.

Professor Schlesinger who has great influence in the United States is obviously, he's a Jewish man, he's farthest away from the truth of God. The way of escape is not through religion, it's not through character, it's not through emotions, it's not through

culture, it's not through wealth, it's not by the benevolent unfolding of history, nor even is it by science. It is through Christ. When the Apostle Peter after discussion in Jerusalem when they came to the conclusions that they came to gave the verdict of the counsel as but we believe, this is the Apostle's Confession, the Apostle's Creed, but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they. He was giving the truth of the word of God.

Salvation is through Christ and through Christ alone. Let us never forget that. As a lovely anecdote that I love to read and tell upon occasion, some of you have been in the chapel a long time you may have heard it once, you may have heard it twice. A story is told of a distinguished man of science who had to cross a ferry and a rowing boat, as the man at the oars pulled him across the water the scientist said, "Do you know astronomy?" And he said, "No, I do not." Well then the man of science said, "A quarter of your life is gone. Do you know anything about geology?" He said, "No." "Well then one half of your life is gone. Do you know anything about biology?" And he said, "Well really, I'm sorry, I don't know anything about biology either." He said, "Then three quarters of your life is gone." Just then the boat struck a snag and upset and they both plunged into the water and he cried out to the man of science, "Do you know how to swim?" And he said, "No." He said, "Then your whole life is lost." [Laughter]

Well, it doesn't really give us any theological truth but at least it illustrates the fact that it's important to know the truth that is significant. And the truth that is significant is that salvation comes through our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. It does not come through culture, it does not come through character, it does not come through religion, it does not come through the ordinances, it does not come through your emotions, or your culture, or your wealth, or even your scientific mind. It is only through our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

We invite you to come to him and put your trust in him by God's grace. Believe in him, who offered the atoning sacrifice for sinners. And receive as a free gift the eternal

life that our Lord Jesus Christ provides. May God give you grace to come to him. Let's stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for the word of God and for the many lessons that are contained within it. Some obvious and on the surface, but others not so obvious. Some requiring the Holy Spirit's illumination in significant detail. Give us, Lord, the reflective mind to read the word of God, ponder it under the Spirit's guidance and illuminate it for us so that we know the truth and then, Lord, the motivation to follow the truth as it is found in Christ. If there are some here who have never believed in our Lord, Lord touch their hearts. May they recognize their need and flee to him who saves sinners. For Jesus' sake. Amen.