A Change in Perspective — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 14:6–13 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, March 6, 2022 · *Kingdoms in Conflict*

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And so thanks to the team and leading us in that, but thank you thanks to you for engaging and participating. For those of you who are guests today, first off, welcome. Thank you so much for being here. It's been a great morning, and awesome with Manning's baptism. It's very exciting to get to see that and to celebrate that. And if it's your first time to Broadview, I want to encourage you to consider connecting with us. You'll have an opportunity to do that at the end of the service, but if you get bored with the sermon and you just want to do it anyway, probably you don't want to come back so you probably don't want to connect with us.

But at any point in the service you can go to broadview.life/guest and you can fill out that connect card. That's also the same connect card that if you're a member of our church, maybe you've been attending for a while and if God moves on your heart, you want to make some kind of decision spiritually and follow up with somebody later on the week, then you can use that same site. Just go to broadview.life/guest or you can go to broadview.life/next. Either one takes you to the same card and a way for you to take your next step.

Or whatever the Lord's doing. As a church, we've been in a book of the Bible called Revelation. You've probably heard of it, even if you're not a very Christian person. It's the last book of the New Testament. It's got all kinds of crazy stuff in there. John writes in what's called apocalyptic genre. So he uses symbol laden terms and picturesque language to describe realities that were probably in his day and age beyond the reach of what he was typically used to. And we've been working through it line by line, chapter by chapter, taking breaks in between and actually today we're at the end of a series in chapters 11 chapters 12, 13 and 14.

And so after today we're going to take another break. Because there's only so much of the book of Revelation people can take, you know, in one sitting, and only so much preachers can preach, you know, in one sitting. I can take a little break as well. And so we're kind of coming to the conclusion of this section where John has essentially kind of put pause on the movie. And there's been a sequence of events with these seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls of wrath that are yet to come. And each time there's a little interlude or a little break in the action where John says, now let me kind of fill in some of the gaps.

And this series we've been in chapters 12, 13, and 14, has been filling in the gaps about this conflict that has been raging between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness from the very beginning of time. Whenever God created the heavens and the earth, it did not take long for an angel of God's creation, just like it didn't take long for a human, to sin against God and to bring sin into the world and with sin brokenness and with that rebellion, a hostility against God, an enmity, an opposition.

Towards God by Satan and those who follow in his way. And so chapter twelve, thirteen and fourteen has been describing that in a kind of big way and with picturesque language and so much of the things that we've seen have been out of this world. Like we saw in chapter twelve a woman who was pregnant. This woman was clothed with the sun. She had twelve stars on her head, she had the moon under her feet, really impressive lady, and we said that was not just a literal physical woman, that was she was representing a community of people in the Old Testament called Israel.

And Israel was God's chosen people. He chose them because through Israel, through the seed of David, would come a promised Messiah, a deliverer, someone who would rescue God's people from their sins and from their captives, from their people who were abusing them and mistreating them that deliverer and messiah was and is the Lord Jesus Christ, which was the second person we saw in chapter 12. The pregnant woman was pregnant with a male child. It said that male child was going to rule with a rod of iron, that male child ascended up to the throne of God.

And we said that was a picture of Jesus Christ. And not just that he was born, lived, died, rose again, but that he ascended to the Father, and he is right now ruling and reigning. At the right hand of God. The third character we saw in chapter 12 was a fiery red dragon. He had seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads,[1] and we said that was a representation of Satan. And thankfully John defines the characters at each point along the way in the book of the Revelation, so you don't have to s you don't have to guess every time.

You got to guess sometimes, but you don't got to guess every time. And that Satan was essentially crouching at the feet of the woman, ready to devour her child as soon as he was born into the world, which we said was symbolic of Satan's attempts to thwart the redemptive plans of God at every point along the way from the very beginning to the birth

and resurrection of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Even till today, as God's people seek to continue advancing God's plans. And that's what we ended with in Revelation chapter 12.

Essentially, Satan failed in his effort to stop Jesus. And now he has been cast out of heaven and he is on the earth raging against the people of God. He says he persecutes the woman and the rest of her offspring, which we said are you. And me. That brought us to Revelation chapter 13. And Revelation chapter 13, we see this red dragon who has been defeated, but yet still very angry, still very powerful. He rises up. In Revelation 13 two additional beasts. So more apocalyptic language. The first beast was the beast from the sea, the second beast was the beast from the earth or the beast from the land.

And we said that the beast from the sea was a representative of an evil end times empire headed by a political leader. Sometimes the Bible refers to him as the antichrist, and that the second beast from the land was a false prophet who will be head of this worldwide or very popular global impacting religion, false religion. And that this false religion is going to be used by this end-times government to justify their horrendous actions against Christians and Jews. Just like we've seen happen in human history where dictators, evil authoritarians, will use religion.

And in the name of religion, commit unspeakable horrific acts. That's going to happen at the end. And so in chapter 13, if you're taking notes, we saw this these two beasts use an unholy mix of godless politics and false religion to crush the people of God. And it was a terrible picture in Revelation chapter 13 of every Christian who refused to take the mark of the beast. Or in other words, they refused to bow down to the antichrist, then they were marked for death, sentenced to death, and they were excluded from society.

They could no longer buy or sell or do any of these things. Now people disagree on how we should interpret those chapters. Some people say all of those things were fulfilled in the first century. All right, so Nero was the antichrist, Rome was the evil king government, the godless government, Judaism, or I'm sorry, emperor worship of Rome was the false religion. And all of it was fulfilled in the first century. There are good arguments for that. I'm not saying it's a bad view, but some people say that's what Revelation 12 and 13 and 14 are.

Others would say, no, you know, yeah, there are similarities in history, but this is just kind of a descriptive way of talking about what Satan always does in opposition to God's redemptive plans advancing in the world whether it's first century, fourth century, 20th century, or 40th century. It's they call this called the idealist perspective. It's a spiritualization of what happened. And they say it's happening all the time. This is just types, and they happen over and over and over again. And there's that's pretty persuasive argument as well. And then there's what's my position, which is yes, partially.

A lot of those things were fulfilled in the first century. And we can agree there is a sense in which they happen throughout history over and over again. You can look at the Holocaust as a great example of end times like Scenarios taking place. And you could even look at things happening today and go, oh, you know, Jesus is about to come back. It's happening all over again. Yes, it happens over and over and over again. But that there's going to come a final fulfillment of these things A final evil end times empire, a final antichrist, a final false prophet, false religion that persuades the world to kill Christians and malign anyone who bears the name of Jesus and that day will come and so we need to be prepared.

And that's been the whole purpose of John's writing the book of Revelation. That's why we're going through it as a church, because e even if we're not in the end of days, in that sense, like Jesus is about to come back tomorrow. We could be. And if we are, we need to be ready. And John calls for certain things from believers. He makes three calls. He says in Revelation chapter 13 that we need endurance and faithfulness.[2] And then later in chapter 13 he says we need wisdom. When Jesus talks about false prophets and false religion, he says in Matthew chapter 24, this is going to happen all the time.

Like keep watch because as you get closer to the end, more and more people are going to try to deceive you. Many will come in my name, lead many people astray. Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many, and the lawlessness will multiply, and the love of many will grow cold. And so in some ways what I'm trying to show you from the lips of Jesus and from the book of Revelation is these things shouldn't surprise us. They're happening all the time. This is Satan's MO. This is how he opposes God.

These these things are how God's people sta stay steadfast. And continue to advance God's plans until he comes again in ultimate triumph. So what do we need? We need endurance, we need faithfulness, and we need wisdom. That's the call from the Lord Jesus in the book of Revelation, particularly as it comes to this kingdom conflict in chapters 12 to 14. How do we get that endurance, faithfulness, and wisdom? That's what chapter 14 is about. And so as we read chapter 14, I want you to think of chapter 14 as John retelling the conflict again, but this time he's telling the conflict from a different perspective.

In fact, if you think of chapter 12 as the historical perspective. It kind of gives the big overarching overview of evil versus good from the beginning to the very end. Think of chapter 13 as looking at the conflict from a human perspective Almost like from the side of the antichrist. If you're a Christian and you're looking at it from a purely human perspective, it's devastating the Antichrist is killing all of your friends. The false religion is persuading the world. It's like we are on down and out, and w this is terrible.

But then John comes alongside in chapter 14 and says, but don't just see it through the human perspective, and don't just see it through the historical perspective. You need to see it from the perspective of heaven. And when you look at it from this perspective, when you

look at it from the heavenly perspective, you'll be reminded. Of a few key facts. That when you remember those key facts, you will endure, you will remain faithful, and you will have the wisdom you need to persevere. And so that's what our passage is about.

Now we looked at verses 1 to 5 last week. Let's read chapter 14, verses 6 to 12 this week. John says, then I saw another angel flying high overhead with the eternal gospel to announce to the inhabitants of the earth, to every nation, every tribe, every language and every people. That's another way of saying everybody. Every time you see sets of four in the book of Revelation, that's saying everybody, everything. So you got this angel, he's flying up in the air, he's preaching the gospel to the whole world. And then he speaks with a loud voice, and he says, fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come.

Worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water. You see the sets of four: heaven, earth, sea, springs of water. That's his way of saying the God who created everything. So he preaches the whole gospel to the whole world to worship a God who created everything. Then the second angel followed and said, it is fallen. Babylon the great has fallen. She made all the nations drink the wine of her sexual immorality, which brings wrath. And then the third angel, another, followed them and spoke with a loud voice, if anybody worships the beast in its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he will drink.

He also will drink the wine of God's wrath. It is poured full strength into the cup of his anger. He will be tormented with fire and brimstone, or fire and sulfur, in the sight of the holy angels. And in the sight of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. There is no rest, day or night, for those who worship the beast and its image, or anyone who receives the mark of its name. This calls for endurance from the saints who keep God's commands and their faith in Jesus.

Anybody ever heard of those fire and brimstone preachers? Okay, that's where that comes from. All right. So this is my fire and brimstone sermon. You ready? Here we go. No, I'm just kidding. I'm not kidding, but I'm not I am kidding, but I'm not kidding. It is a literal fire and brimstone message. This chapter 14, I want you to think of it like this. Because John, three different times in chapter 14, he says, then I saw. He said it in verse 1, he says it right here in verse 6, and he's going to say it again in verse 14.

Then I saw, then I saw, then I saw. So there's structure to this chapter and the whole point of the structure is to say look at it differently. If you're God's people, you're on the earth, you're going through persecution, you're getting tribulation in your life, don't forget these things. And chapter 14 verses 1 to 5 he talks about God's protection of his people. You got the 144,000. They are marked, they're sealed, they're protected. In our passage today, he's going to talk about the proclamation of the gospel. Got this angel preaching the gospel.

And then when we pick it up again after Easter, he's going to talk about God's wrath being poured out on the earth. So that's the heavenly perspective. Even in the midst of hardship, even in the midst of strong. Struggle. Even when it doesn't feel like God is working, don't forget that his people are protected. His gospel will be proclaimed to the ends of the earth and his judgment will come. That justice will be served, that every wrong will be righted, every sad thing come untrue. If you will remember those things, even in the midst of your hardships, you will be able to endure, be faithful, and walk in wisdom.

So let's talk about the preaching of the gospel. The gospel is described as the eternal gospel. It's being preached by these three angels. Actually being preached by one angel. Then three other angels talk later, but people wonder, is this a liter like is there a literal angel flying mid-sky, the way it describes it mid-air? In other words, like in the not up in heaven, but like on the earth above the where the planes are, you know, maybe. Not all the way above the clouds, you got to see the angel, and then the angel's preaching with some kind of very loudspeaker and people are hearing the gospel on the earth from this angel and the angel goes to the entire earth, so he's literally all over the world.

Is that what's going on? Some people say yes, it's a literal angel preaching literal gospel through literal words, through like some kind of a literal speaker I just don't know. That's possible, certainly, but I think John maybe again using apocalyptic language to talk about a literal reality, but using pictures to describe how that activity works itself out on the earth. So I think yes, there are real angels. This angel that's preaching the gospel is in a sense he is the energizing force, the spiritual force that's animating the preaching of the gospel, but that the gospel being preached is actually done by human beings.

Done by those hundred and forty-four thousand, done by the believers who are remaining steadfast on the earth. And the reason I say that is because every other time in the New Testament that the gospel is preached, it's preached by a human being. Not by an angel. So the angel is participating in the gospel being preached. He's that spiritual force animating it, but the gospel is being preached. By people. That's exactly what Jesus said would happen again in Matthew 24. If you're taking notes, you might think of Matthew 24 as the book of Revelation in one chapter from Jesus.

And like Jesus, his master teacher, he simplifies everything. But in Matthew 24, he says, even in the midst of this persecution, in times tribulation, this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed to all the earth. And then the end will come. So he's talking about an antichrist, he's talking about abomination of desolation, he's talking about Christians being Killed everywhere. He says it will be so bad, no single Christian would have survived had I not cut it short. But even though all that's true, Jesus still says, and the gospel will be proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

So what you see, this picture, is this overwhelming power of the gospel that when people believe the gospel, when they receive it into their life and they begin to proclaim it in the world. That gospel power is an unstoppable force. No matter what Satan tries to do, no matter what the antichrist tries to do, no matter what culture tries to do to silence the gospel, it will not be silenced. And you have these Christians being maligned, they're ostracized from the social systems and institutions of the day. They are under the threat of death, but it's as if they do not care because they are bought with a price they are not their own.

They are loyal to Jesus and they are preaching that gospel until Jesus comes again. This is exactly what chapter 12 said was going to happen. In chapter 12, verse 11, which we looked at on the first week, when Satan is thrown down to the earth, the heaven erupts in this song, and one of the things they say in the song is that they Christians have conquered Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they love not their lives even to the point of death.

This is what's happening in chapter 14. You have these Christians or some say they're a remnant of Jews, some say it's Christians and Jews, some say it's the church. You have God's people who are on the earth and they are saying to themselves, I don't care what culture says I don't care what the antichrist is going to do. I don't care if it means my death. I'm not afraid of death because my life is hidden with Christ and God. I'm bought with the price I'm not my own and so I'm going to be faithful to preach the gospel no matter what and that gospel is being pumped out into the world to every tribe, tongue and nation, no matter how hard people try.

And stop it there, overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of the testimony. If you're taking notes, it's the gospel, the power of the gospel. The blood of Christ, the story of the cross, that's what's animating the courage of the saints. Tertullian, he was a second-century Christian apologist,[3] he says that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. It's always worked this way. It's always been persecution in the church that advances the gospel. It was this way in acts chapter eight the gospel was stuck in Jerusalem.

Nobody was doing anything. Those twelve apostles were just sitting on their hands and preaching sermons and having a grand old time, but it wasn't going out. So they took persecution by this crazy guy named Paul, who was then named Saul. Who who tried to kill Christians and wipe them off the face of the earth and that was that expansion of the gospel to the ends of the earth. And the same thing happens throughout history, the same thing will happen at the end. And when that gospel is received and internalized and embraced.

It can't be stopped. Now how does the antichrist try to stop it? He tries to stop it the same way he's always tried to stop it. And it's through our fear and human desire. Satan has always leveraged human fear and human desire to draw us away from God and towards the world. This is what he does in my life. I'm sure he does this in your life. Sinful expressions of

fear and sinful expressions of human desire. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life. Satan today, just like the antichrist in the future, he will say something along the lines of, surely you don't believe Jesus is going to save you.

Surely you don't think that when you die you're going to go to heaven. I mean this world is all that there is, all that there was, all that there ever will be. You're not one of those fundamentalists, those crazy fundamentalists, are you? Surely you don't think that you know, following Jesus as it relates to your sexuality, that's liberating. I mean, this is liberation. You define morality. You say what's right and wrong. You determine what's good and what's not good. It's about your truth. Who you know this nonsense of objective standards and a final truth and a God who judges you for right and wrong that's not going to satisfy you.

That's not going to make you happy in life. Human desire, sinful expressions of human desire and fear of death, Satan has always used those things to say don't go down that route. Don't don't be a follower of Jesus. Don't put your faith. Don't just nonsense of repentance and confession. That's just a straitjacket used to bring you down. And a lot of people buy into it, and a lot of people go headlong into living life outside of God's design, and it always results in misery, it always results in some kind of brokenness.

And that's what Satan tries to do to these Christians on the earth. But this group, for whatever reason of believers, say, no, I'm not afraid of death. And I'm not going to be captivated by my lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes and pride of life. I'm going to be loyal to Jesus because of the gospel. Because this message that I was a sinner separated from a holy God and that holy God loved me anyway and he sent his son into the world to live a sinless life that I sure can't live.

And even though he had every reason to just claim what was his always and forever, eternal fellowship with God, that Jesus laid his life down for me, that he became an atoning sacrifice. He stood in my place for my sin on the cross. So now through faith in Jesus, when God sees me, he doesn't see my sin. He doesn't see my shame. He doesn't see my mistakes. He sees the Son that he loves. I am in Christ. He is in me. Now when God looks at me, he doesn't see my failures.

He sees his righteousness. Because that's true. I don't have to earn anything. I don't have to satisfy my lust and passions. My heart is content in the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't have to care what people think about me. Who cares if I don't have a certain kind of car or live in a certain kind of house or wear a certain kind of clothes? Who cares what my reputation is in this person or that person? All I care about is what God thinks about me. And when I look at what God thinks about me in Jesus, he sees me as the son that he loves.

And when you receive that gospel into your life, when you believe it, I mean really believe it. Not just I go to church on Sundays, but I believe the gospel. Nothing will stop you. Absolutely no temptation, absolutely no condemnation, no shame. You are free. The power of sin is broken in your life, the penalty of sin is erased in your life, and you become someone who cannot be controlled by the fear of death. Or by appealing to your human appetites because of the power of the gospel. That's what you have here in chapter 14.

It's just an overwhelming, unstoppable force, this gospel being proclaimed in these people who believe it and preach it to the ends of the earth. And it's still true today. You anybody who calls on the name of the Lord can be saved. We just saw it with Manning and his baptism. It don't matter how young you are, it doesn't matter how old you are. If you've never heard the gospel and responded to the gospel by faith, then today's the day of salvation. Today's the day where you can say, man, I don't, I never knew I could be happy outside of the American dream or X, Y, or Z expectations on me.

And the truth is you can. The gospel, if you're taking notes, the gospel destroys our fear of death, destroys our tendency towards human greed, and it reorients our heart towards God and enables us to overcome the lies of the enemy. We don't have fear of death because now we have eternal life we're not controlled by the love of money because our hope is not in this world or the things of this world. This world is passing away along with its desires. My hope is in heaven. And my fear is replaced with faith.

And my greed is replaced with love, and my family is now the family of God. That's the power of the gospel. Now the rest of the text, what I think it does is it through these angels talks about the proper response to the gospel. Now there are people who read chapter 14 and they say that these angels are preaching the gospel. So the first angel says fear God and give him glory, that's the gospel. And the second angel says Babylon has fallen, and it's bringing God's wrath, and that's the gospel.

And then the third angel talks about the reality of hell and that's the gospel. My only problem with that is that sure don't sound like the gospel to me. Sounds like maybe the implications of the gospel sounds like what might happen to you if you don't believe the gospel, but it is not itself the gospel. So what I want you to think of these three angels doing is they are proclaiming to the world, okay, you got the church, they're preaching the gospel. And people are getting saved. And then you have this angel announcing to the world, since this gospel is true, here's how you ought to respond.

Of course they're not going to respond that way, but here's what he's saying. The first is about the glory of God. So glorify your creator through reverential worship. The second warning is a warning about the futility of idols, and so he's saying, forsake your idols because they are worthless. So forsake your idols through repentance. And then that last message is about hell. And he's saying, escape the judgment that is to come because it is horrific. So

escape the judgment through faith in Jesus. So real quick, we got ten minutes let's look at these three pillars and then we'll and then we'll be done.

Chapter 14, verse 7, he gives the first pillar. He spoke with a loud voice. The first angel says, and again, this is a response to the gospel. So since the gospel is true, fear God and give him glory. Because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship the one who made heaven and earth the sea and springs of water. So he's focusing on the fear of the Lord, he's focusing on the glory of God, and the fact that God is creator. And when he says fear the Lord, he's not meaning like shaking in your boots because the big man in the sky is going to strike you with lightning kind of fear.

Alright that's not that's not the fear. Fear is a holy reverential respect. It is a it's living as if God really is the creator. Like he really did create me. He really did create everything that I see. He is the one for whom I am made. My human flourishing is directly attached to me understanding God for who he truly is. That's what it means to fear the Lord. A lot of people these days talk about this psychologist named Jordan Peterson. Anybody ever heard of Jordan Peterson? And one of the things that people try to get him to d say is whether or not he's a Christian, or does he believe in God and he never answers the question.

And I don't know that he is a Christian. If he is, his definition of Christianity is probably not You know, I don't know. But he always evades the answer. That's what I'll just say. I can't say what I can't say what he is or is I don't know. But he never answers the question. He always says, I live as if God exists. Hey Jordan, are you a believer? I live as if God exists. Do you believe Jesus died and rose again? I believe I live as if God exists. That's what he says.

And people always get frustrated, and it is a evasive answer, but it's so insightful. To what it means to fear God and give him glory. Because fearing God, giving God glory, it's not enough to just believe it up here. It's not enough to verbally assent to it and confess to it. What it means to fear the Lord is to live as if God is. To live as if God has said. To live as if he is the creator and your flourishing is directly related to your worship of him and the giving of your life to him.

That's what it means to fear the Lord. And that's what you should do if the gospel is true. If the gospel is true, how can I not surrender everything to this creator, how can I not rest in him? How can I not love him? Why would I withhold anything from him? Why would I pursue worthless, futile idols? Why would I try to satisfy my soul in anyone else besides the Lord? So fear God, give him glory through reverential worship. The second thing is to forsake worthless idols through repentance of sin.

Verse 8 says, this other angel, a second angel, followed, and he said, it has fallen. Babylon the great has fallen. She made all the nations to drink the wine of her sexual immorality, which brings wrath. So what is this bit about Babylon? How many of you ever heard of

Babylon? It's an ancient city, okay? Old Testament days. King Nebuchadnezzar. You guys remember Daniel and the lion's den? That's Babylon. King Neb. Babylon back then ancient Babylon was known for its wealth, its prosperity, its power. Everybody wanted the Babylonian Empire. But it was like most wealthy nations, sexually corrupt, full of idolatry.

And even God's people, when they were captured by Babylon, even the people of God were corrupted. Except for Daniel and his crew, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. That was their Babylonian names, by the way. So when John talks about Babylon has fallen, he's not talking about historical Babylon. Some people say he's talking about Rome because Rome was Babylon. Like Rome had all the power. Rome had sexual corruption. Rome had rampant idolatry. And they may be right. Some say it's future Babylon, so it's America, it's Israel, it's Jerusalem, it's Saudi Arabia, it's you know the possibilities are endless.

Who is Mr. Babylon? And we'll get to that when we get to chapter 17. I can't wait. I'm just joking. I have no idea who Babylon is. But everybody guesses, well, who's Babylon? Here's what I want you to think about Babylon. Babylon, when you read Babylon, think rampant idolatry, sexual immorality, and the mindset that says that's the way to go. That's Babylon. Now are there nations, are there all that? Sure. Well we don't know who it is because the Bible doesn't say. But the spirit of Babylon is God is wrong, man is right, worship is silly, sexual immorality is satisfaction, idolatry is great.

And here's John saying, listen, if the gospel's true, that's nonsense. If the gospel is true, those idols are worthless. If the gospel is true, then you are wasting your time trying to find your satisfaction. And these kinds of things, they will never satisfy you. They will never bring you peace. They will only fail you. And when they fail you, it will invite the wrath of God into your life. So drop it. What are you doing? You're wasting your time. You're wasting your emotional capital. So fear God, give him glory, drop the idols, and then and then finally escape the coming judgment.

And this is the hard one, verses 9 to 11. This third angel follows them. I don't know if they were sequential order or what, but He says, if anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, talking about the mark of the beast in chapter 13. Then that person will also drink the wine of God's wrath. And that wrath, God's wrath, is going to be poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and that person will be tormented. With fire and sulfur, fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb.

Some people say hell is the absence of God. Looks like he's right there watching. And the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. There is no rest, day or night, for those who worship the beast and its image, or anyone who receives the mark or its name. Now, so a couple questions. Is this literal? Is this figurative? Is this hell? Is this something else? Some

people say no, it's not literal, it's figurative. Some people say no, it's not hell, it's it is a picture of the fall of Babylon in the future.

So it's some future kingdom, it's some war-torn city with smoke going up and the language about forever and ever, that's just, you know. He's exaggerating. Others would say, no, this is a description not just of the destruction of a city, but the destruction of not the destruction of anything, this is a picture of the torment of hell. And that there is a real hell, there's a real devil, and a real devil goes to a real place called hell, and real people spend eternity with that real devil in that real place.

When they refuse to submit to Jesus as Lord. And so whether or not you are a person who spends eternity with God as opposed to a person who spends eternity separated from God has everything to do with your confession about Jesus. Say, well, how do you know that? Because it's about the mark. He says anybody who takes the mark of the beast goes to hell. And that's why the mark of the beast isn't a vaccine. That's why the mark of the beast is not little technology that gets snuck under, ooh, I accidentally took the mark, oh I'm going to hell.

No, that's nonsense. The mark of the beast is a confession you make. Maybe if there's technology to it, but it's a it's an abandoning of your faith. I reject Jesus, and if you do that, you probably never believed in him in the first place. Or it's a refusal to ever bow the knee to Jesus. That's nonsense. I'm taking, I'm, my faith is in this guy. My faith is in this world. My faith is in that promise, not that. And why would someone take the mark of the beast? Well, because anybody who doesn't is under threat of death.

Anybody who doesn't can't buy or sell. Anybody who doesn't, they get canceled. They get silenced. They get ostracized. So if you're living for this world and the things of this world, you have a strong temptation to tow the line and say what everybody says you need to say and disassociate yourself from Jesus and those crazy Christians. But what you lose in taking the mark of the beast is eternal fellowship with God, and what you get is wrath. And I'm not a good hellfire preacher. Like I don't bang on, you know, bang on things, but it's legitimately real.

And people will spend eternity in a place called hell separated from God. Now I know it brings up all kinds of questions and it's hell forever and all that stuff, and I don't have time to answer all those questions. Just suffice it to say you don't want to go there. And if the gospel is true, why would you? Jesus went through hell on the cross for you so you could be saved. So you don't have to go there. And so the appeal this morning is if you're not a Christian and you hear that there is a God who created you that you've been separated from because of your own sinful rebellion, but that God loved you so much He sent His Son into the world so that through faith in Him you could repent of sin and have forgiveness of your sins, why would you not take that offer?

Why would you not freely receive the gift of God's grace into your life? Hell was not created for us. It was created for the devil. But there will be people who join him because of their refusal to bow the knee to Jesus as Lord Now Philippians says one day every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. You want to be a person who bows the knee today. And so if the Spirit of God is working in your heart this morning, if you'd say, you know what, I always thought church was, I always thought Christianity was about going to church and giving some tithe money and going to Sunday school and living really good and trying really hard, that is not what Christianity has ever been about.

It's about a God who loves you, a God that you've sinned against, that you cannot do anything to make that right no amount of good can outweigh that wrong. He's a holy God, and any sin against a holy, eternal God has eternal consequences. So because he knew you couldn't save yourself, he sent Jesus To save you, to die in your place for your sins. And you can go to church till the cows come home. It's not going to make you a Christian. And you can give all your money to the church.

It's not going to earn you salvation. The only way you can receive salvation is by grace. Something that's a gift, not of works. Otherwise, we'd have room to boast. It's totally by grace. And it's an offer that's available to every single person who would call on the name of the Lord. And if you've not done that, I don't care how long you've grown up in church. If you've never repented of sin and put your faith in Jesus And trusted him and him alone for your salvation, then today's the day of salvation.

Do not harden your heart. Let today be the day where you say, I'm going to be a follower of Jesus. If you've never been baptized, you've never made that public commitment, then just like Manning did say, yeah, Jesus is my Lord. I'm not saving myself. I'm not relying on my wisdom any longer. I'm with him. I'm with Jesus. And there's an opportunity for you to do that publicly. If you're watching this online, you can do that right there where you're seated at your house or car or wherever you're doing. Wherever you're watching this, we're going to throw a QR code up on the screen and you can scan this QR code.

And it'll take you to an online card, and you can just check. I want to receive Jesus as Lord. I want to be baptized. Whatever decision you need to make today. And then there's also an opportunity for you to come as Taylor leads us through a time of response for you to come forward and say, I want to make Jesus Lord of my life. I want to rededicate my life to Jesus. However it is the Lord's working in your life, let's let's take a few moments and respond to Him. Father, we thank you for this time together in your Word.

We thank you that we can look at things from a different perspective and it can change everything. It is it's easy living in this world to get discouraged. And when things are not going the way we think they ought to go and people aren't doing the things we think they

ought to do, it's just human nature to say, God, where are you? What are you doing? Why are you not acting? And so forgive us if we've forgotten that you're always working. You're always active. You're working all things together for good.

Your gospel is being proclaimed. Your people are under your sovereign protection. Doesn't mean we don't suffer. Doesn't mean it isn't hurt. But we belong to you, and that these injustices that we see in our world, this brokenness, this is just wrong. So many of the things that we see is just wrong. Forgive us for being people who try to take vengeance into our own hands when it belongs to you and you alone. And to entrust to a perfect God who has promised every wrong will be righted, every injustice will be made just.

So help us to see our world from that lens. Give us a change of perspective. And as we respond to you now, I pray for wisdom and endurance. And a heart of faith that follows you wherever it is you're calling. Make us courageous through the power of the gospel. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to take just a few moments to respond. You don't have to come to the front, but the altar's open if you want to pray. I'll be happy to pray with anybody. But let's respond to the Lord as He leads.

Don't forget you can scan that QR code if that's something you're more comfortable with, and we'll follow up with you later this week. I know making the decision to become a Christian in our day and age. There's a lot of baggage associated with that, and maybe there's some questions you have, intellectual doubts, emotional hurdles that prohibit you from just saying, I, you know, I want to follow Jesus. Don't don't leave just because those are present in your life without responding to the pull of the Holy Spirit. And maybe that doesn't mean you become a Christian, you get baptized, but maybe it does mean you start a conversation.

And you say, I'm going to have a little more of an open mind to what this gospel stuff is all about and what Jesus is all about. And you may be surprised that some of those hurdles or doubts are not as prohibitive as they may look at first glance. And so start the conversation, scan the QR code, give us some info, and we'll follow up with you. Lord Jesus, we thank you for this time. We thank you for your word. Your word is living and active. It is sharper than any two edged sword.

It cuts to the heart of the matter, separates our what we say we are and what we say we think and what we say we do from the reality of who we really are, what we really think. And the secret motives. Your word is convicting, it is correcting, it has a rebuking power, but it's also a correcting power, it's a power that trains us in righteousness, it's a power that equips us. For every good work that you've called us to do. So thank you for your word. Pray that the Spirit of God would take the Scripture this morning.

And would give each and every person who has heard it the wisdom they need to know what to do and the faith and the courage to put it into practice, no matter the cost. And we give

you glory, help us to live lives that are completely surrendered and submitted to your will in all things. And we pray these things in Jesus′ name. And God′s people said, Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "ten crowns on each for every horn"; in Revelation 12:3 the dragon has seven heads and ten horns with seven crowns (diadems) on its heads. The ten crowns on the horns belong to the beast from the sea in Revelation 13:1. Source: Revelation 12:3 and 13:1 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "in Revelation chapter twelve that we need a call for endurance … in chapter twelve he says we need endurance and faithfulness"; the call for "endurance and faithfulness from the saints" is in Revelation 13:10, and the call for wisdom follows in Revelation 13:18. Source: Revelation 13:10 and 13:18 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "a first-century Christian apologist"; Tertullian lived c. AD 155–c. 220, and his line that "the blood of the Christians is seed" is from his *Apology* (Apologeticum), chapter 50. Source: Wikipedia, "Tertullian." ↩