

Revelation 11:15-12:7 – How to Bring Renewal

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[0 : 0 0] It's good to see you. I'm glad to see that the school still has their Christmas decorations up! I'm seeing blue lights and orange lights. Maybe they're just not late, maybe they're early.

Maybe they're looking forward to Christmas already. They're like, we're done with this school year now. Let's get us to Christmas. Well, it's good to see you. My thanks to Jeff for teaching last week.

Appreciate that. And thanks to Joe and Matt as well for leading us in worship this morning. I could have done with staying there for a little bit longer, if I'm honest. But maybe that's just me. I just want to pray and then we're going to open the word in Revelation.

Father, I just want to thank you this morning, Lord, for the work that you are doing in our lives, Lord. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that you are a God who is alive, active and among us.

Lord, thank you, Lord, that you have risen from the grave, that you've ascended on high, Lord, that you've sat down, Lord, on your throne. Lord, and we take great comfort in that, Lord, knowing that you are reigning today.

[1 : 1 1] Lord, despite all of the troubles, Lord, despite all of the news reports, Lord, and everything that is going on in the world, Lord, and everything that is going on in our lives, Lord, we want to declare again, and our hearts just want to echo, Lord, thank you for being on the throne.

Lord, we pray this morning for Jason's dad, Lord, who is on his deathbed. Lord, we pray, Lord, that if he doesn't know you, would you draw him to yourself?

Lord, would that be a great witness to him and his family? Lord, that they would come to know you. Lord, as Bill has already prayed, Lord, we want to thank you for the testimony of those in Turkey and in Ukraine.

Lord, we also pray for Jonathan and Katie in Cyprus reaching out to the Turkish refugees now who are flooding onto that island. Lord, we pray, Lord, that you would give them strength, resources, capacity.

Lord, as they just try and just love the people that you put in front of them. Lord, as we are sat here, Lord, we know our own struggles.

[2 : 2 2] Lord, we know our own challenges, each individually. And we just ask this morning, Lord, that you would meet us here, Lord, in your word as we open it, Lord, would you speak to us?

And just give us just give us again, Lord, just the encouragement, Lord, that you're with us. Lord, we ask this in Jesus name. Amen. All right. So if you have been here for any length of time, you know, we're in the book of Revelation, which is at the end of the Bible.

And what I want to try and do this morning is I want to ask you to step back a little bit from the book of Revelation. And I want to I want to for a moment just think about what is going on in the world right now.

And this isn't supposed to be like, you know, a news report. You all have access to that, you know. But I think like one of the things that we've been looking at so far in this book, one question we might ask as we kind of look at this book.

And as I've just prayed about the Lord being on the throne and the challenges that we face and how we, you know, we want to declare again that God knows what he's doing. Like he's not he's not caught out by anything. Right.

[3 : 39] And yet we look we look at the world and we kind of go, well, how do those things marry up? How do those things work together? Why is the world as broken as it is?

Or even a little bit closer to home. Why is a Christian, why is a child, why is a child of God? Do I feel so battered? Do you feel that? Like it's almost like I shouldn't, but I do.

The world shouldn't be like it is, but it is. And I want to suggest that what we see in the passage that's before us is not only the answer to that question, but also some incredible encouragement to us, too.

But to understand it, we kind of have to do some legwork in the Old Testament. And what I want to paint this morning for you is a little bit of kind of surface level thinking about just how the Bible works.

Is that OK? And then kind of maybe just draw some kind of encouragement from that. So to get a better understanding of the answer to this problem, we have to go all the way back to the beginning of the Bible.

[4 : 50] And what I'm going to suggest to you is that, and it's going to come on the screen just to help us and you can take notes, is that that's the Bible. Right?

So the Bible, to see the Bible as one story about perfection, deception, separation, salvation, renewal, followed by perfection.

If you just think about the Bible, you know, briefly, you can get that. Right? So Genesis 1 and 2, perfection. God created everything. He said it was good. He said it was very good. Perfection. And then you have, and I'm a muso, so I'm a musician, so I had to put in repeats.

So some of you kind of recognize that. So the first symbol is a repeat sign. The end symbol there is a repeat sign. So you start your receipt, repeat, and end repeat, and you go up on a loop, or what we might call a vamp.

You just keep going round and round and round until you get called out, and then it's perfection. Right? Right? And so, like, what I want to suggest is that Genesis 1 and 2, we see perfection. God created everything, and it was good.

[5 : 52] Skip to the end of the Bible, and Bill made reference to this. Revelation chapter 21, 20. You get this. God creates everything perfect again. Right? But in the middle, and we don't have a problem with that.

None of us have a problem with that. Right? No. We're okay with that. What we struggle with is the vamp in the middle. The bit that just keeps going round and round and round. Right?

So the deception, the separation, the salvation, the renewal. In the middle, we get this repeating story. It's a cycle.

A repeating story of deception, separation, salvation, and renewal. And you know that in Genesis chapter 3, we get the first of this cycle.

Right? And you remember that Satan convinces Eve, deceives Eve, that following God and obeying God isn't so good for them. And instead, that they should do their own thing and go their own way.

[6 : 48] And as a result, sin, doing their own thing, going their own way, came into the world and separated us from a loving God. So you get deception followed by separation. And God in response then promises to judge sin and have victory over Satan by promising to send a saviour who would take punishment for sin and defeat Satan once for all.

So four words. Deception, separation, salvation, renewal. And you might say that's just kind of like, that's laid out. That's the exposition. In theological speak, we call that the proto-evangelum, the first gospel.

Deception, followed by separation from God and separation from each other. Then God intervenes, salvation. And then God renews his promise and renews his people in renewal.

And then this motif repeats all the way through the Bible. Like you can see it everywhere. And we don't even have time to go through every instant. But we see all the way through the Bible.

And what we see more and more hints about how this salvation would take place and how this renewal would take place. And so it's repeated. Well, actually, it's repeated in Genesis chapter four.

[8 : 04] It's repeated in Genesis chapter six. It's repeated in Genesis chapter nine. God promised God's promise to Noah. Then it's God's promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12.

That promise gets repeated to his sons, Isaac and Jacob. And then to Joseph. You get this deception, separation, salvation, renewal. And then it's repeated as God's promise to the nation under Moses in Exodus 19, which is critical for our chapter this morning.

And then it's repeated and developed as God's promise to David in 2 Samuel chapter seven. Repeated and developed as God's promise to the Gentiles in Jeremiah 31 and Isaiah 56.

And so if we see this grand story of the Bible as being bookended by perfection and you get deception, separation, salvation and renewal.

And it repeats and develops in repetitive cycles of what theologians call the almost but not yet. We should be able to recognize part fulfillment in almost anywhere in the Bible to one degree or another.

[9 : 09] We should be able to open pretty much any chapter of the Bible and go, is this deception? Is this separation? Is this salvation or renewal? Now, keep in mind that as we go through this section, because those four things play out in this section and we're heading to where?

Perfection, right? So let's just pick it up in verse 15 of chapter 11. I'll just show you how this works out. And then what I want to try and do is challenge those four concepts in our thinking.

Because for the most part, Christians still fall into that deception separation deal. We still don't think the right things about God and the right things about us.

We've been deceived. And because of that, we're separated from God and we're separated from each other. So we don't believe, just a little tangent. We don't believe that we are new creations in Christ Jesus.

That we have the power of the Holy Spirit living in us. We don't believe that. That's called deception. What does it do? It separates us from God. It separates us from walking rightly with God.

[10 : 15] Right? And so God is continually asking us to step out in faith as almost like a salvation action. So that he might bring renewal.

And I want to suggest that oftentimes the things that we struggle with is, yes, we all want renewal. Because like we all want to get up in the morning and feel better.

Don't we? Like it's probably why my caffeine intake is so high. Right? But actually our issue is that we are stuck in this cycle of deception, separation, and then wanting salvation and renewal.

But look, I'll get there. Chapter 11, verse 15 sets it up for us. So you know our style. We're going to go through a little bit. I'll talk a bit. We'll read a bit. I'll talk a bit.

We'll read a bit. And then we'll close. So the seventh angel blew his trumpet. Stop there. So just as a recap, for those of you who just may be coming to this new or skipped a few weeks or whatever.

[11 : 17] But we have at least 21 judgments taking place in the book of Revelation. Now, I would probably argue there's more. But let's go at least 21.

Right? So we have seven seal judgments. They're called seal judgments because the Lord is opening seals on the scroll. Every time he does, there's a judgment. Then we have seven trumpet judgments.

Called trumpet judgments because every time a trumpet blows, there's judgment. You get the kind of gist. Right? And then bowl judgments are what's coming next. Every time a bowl is empty, there's judgment.

All right? So the seven trumpets, which is where we're at now, are part of the seventh seal. So the seventh seal is opened. And part of that seventh seal are the seven judgment, the trumpet judgments.

And the judgment of the seventh seal are a series of seven or more judgments. They're known as those trumpet judgments. And then what we see in the seventh trumpet is seven bowl judgments come out.

[12 : 21] All right? So in totality, you might want to think about I've got six seals. And then the last seal, I've got the trumpets. The last trumpet, I've got the bowls. All right?

And so in verse 15 is the last of the trumpet judgments. So the seventh angel blew his trumpet.

And there were loud voices in heaven saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

Now, quick question. Deception, separation, salvation, or renewal? It's renewal, right? So look at the finality of the language that is being used.

So the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. So when did that happen?

[13 : 22] Like, never. Like, it hasn't happened. So just to fill you in, there's some people that say that this judgment here, in the seventh trumpet, is the final story of the church.

Like, the church is now complete. Nice one. Thank you. The authority of Rome has been overcome in the Reformation. Okay? So there's great rejoicing.

Others say that this is the final fall of Jerusalem, where five-month-long siege of Jerusalem by the Romans has ended under General Titus, and Jerusalem has been destroyed.

The second temple has also been destroyed. Others, like myself, see this as the final cycle. So where we get this cycle of deception, separation, salvation, renewal, the final cycle where Jesus ends up setting up his earthly kingdom.

Final renewal. But that hasn't happened yet. And again, look at the language. And we're going to notice some of the language as we go through here. It's helpful for those of you who like to dig a little bit deeper into the Old Testament.

[14 : 30] But look at the language that is here. The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for how long? Forever and ever.

Forever. So, this is one of the results of Jesus coming back, right? And notice, the verse is implying conflict.

The kingdom of the world has become, like, there's an implication there that at some point, the world was something other than the kingdom of Jesus. Deception, separation, right?

Notice verse 16 and 17. The 24 elders who we identified in previous studies as angels, some kind of angelic being.

The 24 elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces, and they have been doing that all the time. So I'm not even too sure why John is telling us. Maybe he's just reminding us, right? Because they keep doing that.

[15 : 29] The sound of his name, boom, on the floor, right? So, they keep doing this. And they worship God, verse 17, saying, We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

You notice the language? You have taken your great power and you have begun to reign. And then he quotes Psalm 2. The nations raged.

Like, Psalm 2 is like a super interesting psalm, in that it's about the reign of Messiah on earth. It's about making the kingdom of the world the kingdom of Jesus.

And that's why it's being quoted here. But it was being told to the psalmist. The psalmist says, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. Verse 8, he says, Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Note that last verse because he's going to quote that again. The psalmist was being told of a renewal that was going to happen in the future.

[16 : 41] Where Jesus was going to come back and go, I'm going to take my power and I'm going to start to reign. And so John is using, or he's seeing, millennial kingdom language being echoed in Revelation 11.

Verse 18, the nations raged. So deception separation, right? But your wrath came, salvation.

And the time for the dead to be judged and for rewarding your saints, the prophets and the saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.

Salvation renewal. Okay? So there is that language again, and that language is the day of the Lord language. There is a finality to the deception, separation, salvation, renewal cycle that has been going on since Genesis 3.

That's the whole point of this chapter. To say that there is an end to this. Then we read in verse 19 that God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of the covenant was seen within his temple.

[17 : 55] And these were flashings of lightning, rumbling, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. Now look, how many of you were here when we studied through Exodus? Like three of you.

Great. There's more of you than that. Look, that's just a direct quote from Exodus chapter 19. Right? And you might say, well, why is he quoting Exodus 19?

Simple. Deception, separation, salvation, renewal. Right? It's Sinai imagery all over again. Sinai imagery, where God had rescued, saved his people from deception, separation.

Take them out of Egypt. Took them into the wilderness. Gave them the law, renewal. Said, I am your God. This is who I am. Right? It's supposed to get us to think about salvation and renewal.

Because it's a language when God created his people anew, bringing them out of Egypt. And so what I'm saying is this.

[18 : 59] That the language that is being used here doesn't point us to the triumph of the Protestant church over the Roman Catholic church or the end of the siege of Jerusalem. Only. It's not.

It's not. Only. Because it could point to those. But it doesn't stop there. Right? Some theologians have a great saying. And you do well just to write it down.

Is that you've got to take the train to the end of the line. Right? You can't just stop in the middle. Right? And so the language here is rooted in the Old Testament of Messiah's final return and subsequent covenant with Israel.

Now, where in the end of chapter 11 we see the final cycle take place, Jesus returning, the question is, where is the beginning of the cycle? Like how do we get it?

You could say, well, how do we get into this mess in the first place? Why do we need salvation and renewal? Right? Right? Like if you're asking that question, you've even never had kids or never worked in a school.

[19 : 58] Like why do we need salvation and renewal? Duh. Right? So where is that? Where is the beginning? Well, it's good to ask. Chapter 12 answers that question.

So in chapter 12, at least the first part, and I would probably suggest the first six verses, give us an overview of where that cycle started. So in chapter 12, John says, and a great sign appeared in heaven.

Now, we're going to be given two signs. So two things. And a sign is something that signifies something else.

Right? Like this should go without saying because we're adults and we understand this. Right? But we're driving down a road and we see a stop sign. Like we don't carry on and go, oh, that was a nice sign.

Like it's telling us to do something. It's telling us that actually there's a T junction coming up. And if we don't stop, we could potentially cause a crash. Right? So it's a sign. It's pointing to something else.

[21 : 03] Right? So the fact that John is going to say, oh, there's a sign. We should not just take these things literally. We should ask ourselves, what is the sign?

What is it pointing to? That's the issue. So he's going to talk about a woman given birth. There isn't a woman given birth.

Why? Why? It's a sign. Does that make sense? So we know it's not a woman given birth. How do we know it's not a woman given birth? He's just told us it's a sign.

Right? It's pointing to something else. It's a picture of something else. So the first sign that John sees there in verse 1 is a woman clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of 12 stars.

It's not a woman. Can I repeat that? Right? It's like it's not a woman with a massive halo and it's not Mary. Good.

[22 : 06] Glad everybody's on the same page. Right? She was pregnant. Verse 2. And she was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

So this is the first sign. And so we should say, well, what does that sign mean? Well, hold fire because verse 3 says that there's another sign that appeared in heaven.

Behold, a great red dragon. If you grew up in the 80s, the word great in Greek is mega. Just love that. It's mega.

He uses it all the time in this chapter. Just mega. Everything's mega. Right? So a mega red dragon with seven heads and seven horns and on his head seven diadems.

His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth so that when she bore her child, he might devour it.

[23 : 06] So look, two signs. One is a woman in childbirth. The other is a great red dragon ready to devour the child. So who or what are these signs?

Well, it doesn't take Sherlock Holmes to figure it out. Right? So clearly we can see the woman to be Israel who births Messiah. Right?

And you might say, well, I don't see that clearly. Well, Genesis 37 is the only other time this language is used. It's actually a direct quote from Genesis 37 where you remember Joseph had had a series of dreams.

And he was bright enough then to go and tell his brothers the dreams. Right? And the dreams had to do with his brothers bowing down and worshipping him.

Right? And Jacob, his dad, was like, oh, those stars that you saw, they're your brothers. Right? That's the only time we see that language. So it's safe to assume that when we see the stars and this imagery, what we're actually seeing is Israel.

[24 : 15] The woman. If you've read your end time stuff in the Bible, so Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Matthew chapter 24, you'll know that Israel plays a crucial part in that end time scenario.

In fact, the whole tribulation period is called by Jeremiah, the time of Jacob's trouble. Gabriel told Daniel that the tribulation period was for Israel as much as for anyone else.

When Jesus speaks about the end time. When Jesus speaks about the end times in Matthew 24, he uses Jewish terminology. He talks about, you know, the Sabbath, fleeing on the Sabbath. It's all Jewish, wrapped up in Jewish terminology.

So the sign of the woman is representative of Israel. It's not a woman. The second sign is this dragon. Now, like, if this isn't a unicorn.

But some people think it is. It's like this great unicorn. It's not. And we know it's not because verse nine tells us it's not. Right? So just flick down to Revelation 12, verse nine.

[25 : 20] The great dragon was thrown down. That ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan. He does. What does he do? Deceives. Right? Deception.

Separation. Salvation. Renewal. So who is it that brings deception? Satan brings deception. Where does this cycle start? The cycle starts with Satan. Because he's the deceiver of the whole world.

Where does it start? It starts with this dragon. And look at a description of him. He was a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns. And on his head, seven diadems.

And you know, the number of seven is important, of course. In Revelation, it refers to completeness or the totality of something. And so here, Satan is described as having seven horns, seven crowns.

And he has ten horns, which is the number of government authority. And so what we're seeing in these three verses are the main characters in our deception, separation, salvation, renewal motif from Genesis 3.

[26 : 25] And if you go back and read Genesis 3, you get the same characters. They're called different things, but they're essentially the same characters. You have the deception by Satan, separation of people from God.

Then you have God promised salvation and renewal through the seed of the woman, the woman being Israel and the seed being Messiah. So same things, different characters.

And so notice what happens in verse 4. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, so fallen angels, and cast them down to earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child, he might devour it.

So we could look at stories throughout the Bible where Satan is deceiving and separating the children of God so that the children could be devoured.

Just think of the book of Exodus, where Pharaoh makes a law that every Hebrew child, every Hebrew male child should be killed.

[27 : 34] What is he trying to do? He's trying to kill Israel. He's trying to kill Israel because from Israel comes who? Messiah. Who is the Messiah?

The seed of the woman who is going to destroy Satan. So no woman, no child. That's just one example.

1 Samuel. Saul, bizarrely, just gets up one middle of the night and tries to kill David for no apparent reason. The royal line of ancestry to Messiah.

You ever read the book of Esther? Like, there's this guy in the book of Esther called Haman who plots to kill every Jew in the kingdom.

Herod tries to kill every male child in Bethlehem under the age of two. Why? Messiah. Verse 5 says that she gave birth to a male child.

[28 : 34] Now notice this. This is the one. What is the male child? It's the one who is to rule over the nations with a rod of iron. So salvation renewal. So to prevent salvation renewal, you've got to get rid of the child.

That's the idea. To get rid of the child, you've got to get rid of Israel, the woman. So this is the one who would rule over the nations with a rod of iron.

So there's a sense here that Jesus, the Messiah, is going to rule and lovingly rule. The Greek word is poimeno, which means to shepherd.

Right? So to lovingly rule over the nations with an unbreakable reign. And again, look, this is Psalm 2 language. The nation's rage.

Messiah will rule with a rod of iron. Isaiah speaks about the same idea we quote every Christmas. Unto us a child is born. Who is the child?

[29 : 35] Messiah, Jesus. A son is given. The government will be upon his shoulder. So she gave birth to a male child, verse 5. One who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.

But, you notice that? But, there's an unexpected thing that's going to happen. Unexpected. But, her child was caught up to God and to his throne. So the unexpected thing was that the salvation renewal motif would almost be on pause.

It would extend to the entire world, not just to Israel. That's the idea. This is the mystery that Paul talks about.

Once hidden, now revealed. That Gentiles get to be invited into the people of God. That by faith, we get salvation and renewal that we so badly need. Where at one point it looked like the dragon had succeeded.

Jesus, Messiah, was in a tomb. He was on a cross, then in a tomb. But, the unexpected thing was that Jesus rose from the dead and then ascended into heaven.

[30 : 43] The deception, separation, salvation, renewal motif continues even where we are sitting today. And, this is really important for us to understand.

That the application of this theology, the application of this idea, impacts us right here, right today. Because, Satan is out to kill the people of God.

And, to destroy the nation of Israel. No nation of Israel, no renewal. No nation of Israel, no return of Jesus to bring renewal. So, the Nazis killed six million Jews.

And, God says, no, no, I'm going to keep my promise. Isaiah asks in Isaiah 66, verse 8, if a nation can be born in one day. And, God says, yes, it can.

And, so on May 15th, 1948, he proved it. Why is the nation of Israel such a problem in world affairs today? Because, no nation of Israel, no woman, no Messiah, no Messiah, no renewal.

[31 : 52] Fast forward to the end of the tribulation. We read in verse 6, that the woman fled into the wilderness where she is a place prepared by God in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days or three and a half years.

And, we'll cover that part next week. So, we've gone from, in six verses, we've gone from the fall of Satan and the fall of man. So, original deception, original separation.

To final salvation and renewal in six verses. And, what is being revealed here is the origin and nature and true essence of the battle between good and evil.

God had created humanity and all things and it was good, perfection. That's where we started. Satan deceived humanity to sin.

We fell and we have become separated from God. A God who is the source and the giver of life. Jesus came to conquer evil and save people from sin.

[33 : 00] And, many of us don't have an issue with that. We get that. But, let me just tell you the thing that I think sometimes we do struggle with. And, that's what I think the thing that we struggle with is the renewal part.

I think that's the bit that we struggle with. Too often I meet Christians who are just beaten down. Beaten down, burnt out, living in fear.

Not doing well. For one reason or another. So, let's just reframe this issue. And, let's just chat about this.

Let's just reframe this issue. Deception, separation, salvation, renewal. For us today. As Christians. And, I'm just going to assume.

I'm just going to make the assumption. That you're a follower of Christ this morning. And, if you're not. Then, my prayer is that by the end of today. You will be. But, I'm just going to assume that you are.

[34 : 04] Too many Christians are caught up in deception. Now, look. Pause there. I don't mean wacky, nut job theology.

Like, I do. There are too many Christians caught up in it. But, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about us. Okay. I'm talking about me. I'm talking about believing untruths about ourselves.

Things are just not true about ourselves. Untruths. That is deception. So, untruths about God. And, untruths about ourselves. And, too many Christians are caught up in wrong thinking about ourselves and about God.

Like, we've talked about this before. How, like, we're caught up in some kind of Christian karma. If, like, if I do this, then God's going to be out to get me. Or, if I don't do that.

Or, if I do this, then God's going to bless me. If I don't do that, God's going to be out to get me. And, I better watch my back because, you know, God's ready to strike me. Too many Christians are caught up in just thinking the wrong things about God.

[35 : 13] And, the wrong things about yourself. The author of this book, Book of Revelation, he also wrote a few letters. Some of them are a little bit tricky to understand.

Like this book. But, there's one that's not so much. And, that's 1 John. His first letter. And, in 1 John chapter 4, verse 4, he wrote this. He said, little children, you are from God.

Pause there. Where are you from? I mean, sure, it doesn't feel like it sometimes, does it? Right? But, little children, you are from God.

And, you have overcome them. That is, actually, he's talking about the whole system of the world. He gets on talking about the Antichrist and then times and stuff like that later on.

But, see that as a cycle. Right? You have overcome them. For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. Like, we don't believe that. Do we?

[36 : 12] Okay, that's called deception. Right? We've believed a different narrative. That the world out there is way more powerful and way stronger than what we have in us.

But, the Bible says, no, no, no. It's the other way around. The Bible says that the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world. Right? Right? Oh, yeah, yeah.

But, you know, our text says a third of the angels fell with Satan. That's a pretty big number. Yeah, it is. And, you might be like, yeah, but they all seem to be in my car. Right?

And, they might be. Deception. Separation. See, what deception leads to is separation. It stops me drawing close to the Lord.

Why? Because I believe something that's not true about myself. Like, how could the Lord even accept me? How could the Lord even want me? Child of God. Poof. So, I'm drawing back.

[37 : 09] I'm drawing back and now all separation. And, the reason I don't find renewal. Because I haven't got to stage two yet of four. I'm still caught in this idea of I'm thinking all of these things.

That aren't necessarily true. Paul addresses it, doesn't he? He says, think the right things. Think about the things that are above. Set your minds there.

And, you might actually be true. It might be right that a third of the angels fell with Satan. But, you know what? A third means that they're outnumbered two to one. And, the one who is leading them has no equal and no equivalent.

So, where is the fear? See, we believe the wrong things and then the wrong outcomes happen. Have you ever just had that feeling that Satan is winning?

And, it's easy, isn't it, to turn on the news sometimes. And, it sure looks like Satan's winning. Sometimes we don't even have to do that, do we? We don't have to turn on the news. We just know from our own hearts that sometimes, like, Satan is winning.

[38 : 23] Have you ever asked the question, where is the renewal in my life? Where is life? How do I get off the treadmill of life?

Or, when Jesus comes back, will he even find kingdom life in me? The Apostle Paul is brilliant.

He is so encouraging. And, Paul leads us to anticipate this question. In 1 Corinthians, he...

When you read both letters, actually, to the church in Corinth, if you know anything about Corinth, you know they had issues. Right? And, there's almost throughout these letters, this question, this background question, is this thing ever going to work?

Am I ever going to work? Am I ever going to be the person that God wants me to be? And, it's framed in this delinquent church in Corinth, that Paul has to, you know, rebuke several times.

[39 : 46] But, the background question is, is what I'm doing, as Paul is writing, he's almost questioning, is this even worth it? Is it going to bring renewal?

Because the church, what... In that church, what Paul saw, looked more like paganism, than it did people following Jesus. And so, it's not a new question, that we have.

Paul suggests that, we will encounter this question. The question of renewal, and how we get there. And how we live the life, the kingdom life, that God wants us to live.

And so, he models for us, a correct view of renewal, in the midst of battle. I think sometimes we, we put off this question, until we're out of the battle.

But my experience is that, the battle, rarely comes to an end. We just kind of deal with it, or bury it. And so, Paul models, a correct view of renewal, in the midst of battle.

[40 : 55] And so, he begins his letters, with these words, in 1 Corinthians chapter 1. And I'll just summarize it, then I'll read it. The summary is this, this is what I've seen God doing in you.

When was the last time you just stopped, and you just reflected, and you asked this question, what do I see God doing with me? What do I see God doing in me?

This is what he said. He said, I give thanks to my God always for you. Like, and you've got to remember, this church is, almost renegade. It's like, it's terrible.

Right? Like, they're getting drunk, on communion wine. And other stuff, that we can't even talk about, because there's kids present.

Like, it's terrible. And he goes, guys, I'm thankful for you. You're like, what? Because of the grace of God, that was given to you in Christ Jesus.

[41 : 55] He's like, I know you don't have much, but you do have the grace of God. Like, you have that much. Then he says, where sin abounds, grace abounds much more. So he's like, I get that, but let's not talk about the sin right now.

Let's just talk about the grace. He says, that in every way, you are enriched in him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony about Christ, was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing, of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, renewed, right?

Salvation, renewal. So Paul said, look, I get, I get the fact, there's a lot of deadness in you. I guess that, I get the fact, there's not a lot of kingdom life in you. I get the fact, that you're struggling, in this area and that.

But he doesn't say any of that. He does get to that later. But he doesn't start there. He says, I see a lot of life in you. You've been given all kinds of gifts, by the grace of God, none of which you deserve, but God has given it to you.

And he says, I've witnessed them. I've seen them in action. And let me tell you, it's got nothing to do with you. It's all the Lord, right? Because you are hopeless without the Lord. I mean, he doesn't say that.

[43 : 09] I'm reading between the lines. And he says, the world has been witnessing that too. And he's like, they can't understand how, how one minute you are worshipping the temple in Athena and Ephesus.

And now, you love people. And you love Jesus. And it may not be perfect, but you're getting there. He says, I see a lot of life in you. Which means you have to squint.

Now, some of you older people won't understand, will understand completely what I mean. You know, I mean, I don't have this issue, but, well, I do, but in a bigger scale.

I don't squint, because it just makes no point. But I know that, if I use Laurie as an example, she will sometimes have her glasses somewhere else.

You know, and it's like, squint. You have to squint. You know what I mean by squint, don't you? Right? You just can't see things clearly. You know, to see things better, you have to squint.

[44 : 15] And I think, I think Paul is squinting. And I think we have to learn to squint. When it comes to spiritual things, and spiritual things in our own life, we have to learn to spiritually squint.

We have to learn to squint to see, the he who is in you. Because sometimes it's not as apparent, is it? Paul wrote to the church in Philippi.

He said, you have to squint your eyes to know him and the power of his resurrection. That was Paul's desire. Paul said, look, at the end of my life, this is just what I want.

I want to know Jesus, and I want to know that his life is in me. That there is renewal taking place in me. Like, that I'm not, I'm not beyond help.

And so it's the spirit of the resurrection who is in us. The Holy Spirit. And that's who we need, isn't it?

[45 : 23] Like, we don't need a program. Like, like, put down your, your seven steps to squinting out good things. Like, I don't even know, that doesn't exist.

What we need is the Holy Spirit. Why? Because the Holy Spirit brings renewal. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings life. So when Paul says in Ephesians chapter 4, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life, and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and be renewed.

He's not talking eschatologically, like, end times. He's not kind of going, sit down, work out your seven year charts, and when the Antichrist is going to come, and when the beast comes out of the pit, and all of that.

He's going, no, no, no. Renewal is a part of our life, as a Christian, each and every day. Renewing your mind means replacing the old way of thinking with a new way.

It's to put to bed deception. And again, I don't mean necessarily theology, and all of that, you know, doctrine, false doctrine. That's part of it.

[46 : 34] But look, practically, each and every day, is to think how God thinks about us. How does God think about us?

How does God think about himself? How does God think about what's happening, and what's going to end up? I mean, essentially, it's to think of all the ways that you can, or are, being deceived, and then to think and speak truth.

That's what it means. And truth brings intimacy with Christ. Look at this. I attempted to reframe it.

Where deception brings separation, truth brings intimacy. And where salvation, we see salvation as an action, as a one-time thing, salvation is sanctification.

It's a process, isn't it? We are being saved, just as we have been saved. And so, thinking right, doesn't lead to separation from God.

[47 : 46] Actually, it brings to intimacy with God. And that intimacy with God, brings about sanctification in our lives, which brings about, the renewal that we all seek. So I've gone off on a major tangent, and I'm not too sure how to get back, only to say, that I think this chapter is talking about, the repetitive cycles, of the Christian life.

Yeah, it's talking about, Jesus coming back, making his kingdom, his kingdom, the kingdom of the world. He's coming and judging, and bringing that final renewal. But can I encourage you this morning, to think right things about God, and right things about yourself.

And those right things, and catch yourself, squint. Squint to see that he who is in you, who is working in you right now, to bring about intimacy, and sanctification, and then finally renewal.

Because Paul argues, that that renewal, is the renewal of the spirit of your mind. That happens each and every day. So may God help us, to do that, to think, and to speak, to ourselves, and to each other, truth.

That we might be brought near, to God, and find renewal in him. Let's pray together. Father, thank you, for your word. Lord, we just come to you, Lord, and we want to acknowledge, Lord, that we, we need, renewing.

[49 : 17] And we might, we might use the term, reviving, refreshing. There might even be some, here this morning, that need saving.

Lord, the need is the same, and the need is you, in our lives, working. Lord, we're so thankful, Lord, that we can, rest on that promise, Lord, that the one who is in us, is greater, than the one who is in the world.

Lord, we want to say sorry, Lord, that we have often, thought things, that are just not, in line with, how you think. Lord, we've, we've believed, falsehood over truth, and we've been quick, to do that.

We've, we've put ourselves down, or we've elevated ourselves. And yet, you call us a child of God. Lord, we're thankful, this morning, Lord, that your word teaches us, that our sins, as children of God, that our sins, are now separated from us, as far as the east, is from the west, that you don't hold, our sins against us anymore.

You're not going to bring us back, them back to us. You're not going to remind them about us. But we're thankful for that, Lord, because, Lord, we get to stand there, in freedom, and in perfection, and in purity, in you.

[50 : 47] Lord, we want to thank you, this morning, Lord, that you give us the truth, to believe. like it's right here. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that you give us the truth, not so that we may, wave it as a flag, or, use it to, build a pedestal, for ourselves.

But you give us truth, that we may draw close to you. That we may know you, and we may know ourselves, in you. Lord, so we thank you, Lord, that you draw us close.

Thank you, Lord, that you, you call us to intimacy. Even as we sung this morning, Lord, that we can, have our sorrows, washed away.

Lord, we thank you, Lord, for the work, that you're doing, by your spirit. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that the work, that you've started in us, you will complete, until the day of Jesus Christ.

Lord, we thank you, Lord, for the renewal, that you bring. Lord, and we pray this morning, Lord, that we would, get a sense, through squinted eyes, of the renewal, that you are doing, each and every day, with us.

[52 : 12] Lord, that you are forming us, into a people of God. We're not perfect, we're far from perfect. And that's why we need you.

Lord, we say, we thank you for your spirit. Lord, and this morning, we just want to, submit to his work, in us. Lord, train our minds, train our thoughts, to think, and set our minds, on things above.

We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you.