

Revelation 12: 15 and 16; "Water from the Serpent's Mouth",
Sermon # 88 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness",
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 4th, 2008,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

We have seen in our last sermon that the dragon was persecuting the woman who gave birth to the male Child. The dragon is the symbolic word picture which represents the bestial strategies of Satan through the Roman Empire, to destroy the forward progress of the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ by the true Church. The Roman Empire, which is the 4th and last World Monarchy which forms the feet and toes of the great image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream. The prophet Daniel, in Daniel Chapter 2 interpreted this dream of Nebuchadnezzar's statue as representing four World Kingdoms, which were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and finally Rome. We will go into the implications of the pictorial representations of these kingdoms in the next sermon which will focus on verse 2 of Chapter 13. They are the Lion, the Bear, and the Leopard, and we will tie them together with Daniel 7, verses 1-8. We need to understand that this fourth World Monarchy was the worst of all, in terms of the persecutions of God's people. But it was "during the days of these kings," it says in Daniel 2: 44, "that the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." This is speaking of God Himself setting up His everlasting kingdom of His dear Son, our Lord Jesus in the days of Pagan Rome's rule. We have seen that Jesus Christ our Lord was crucified under Roman authority in connection with the Jewish Sanhedrim of that day; He was raised from the dead, and ascended up to sit at the right hand of God, where He will remain until "He has put all of His enemies under His feet." (Psalm 110: 1) In fact Psalm 110 verse 2 says, "The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion." God the Father has ordained that the Lord Jesus shall "rule in the midst of His enemies." This has how Christ has ruled among the nations; in and through the preaching of His glorious gospel and the Word of truth. But most certainly it has been in the midst of His enemies.

We have seen that the Dragon's first manifestation after the book of Revelation was written, was the Pagan Roman Empire persecuting the Church through at least 10 of her Emperors from Nero to Diocletian. We have seen that this was the Devil's "heaven". He liked this position very much. He very much liked to be in control politically through these wicked Emperors and did not like being driven out of this heaven. He could more easily attempt to control and persecute the true Church when he had this kind of position. He was "cast out" of this position when Constantine came to power, as we have seen. During the second period of the Roman Empire, from 323 - 756 A.D., Satan, as a Dragon continued to try to persecute the true Church where he could through Rome's Emperors, but now he was forced to take a different form as the subtle Serpent because Christians, for

the most part held the high ground in politics. In this new serpentine form, he troubled the Church internally much more, by introducing false doctrine through the Popes of many generations. This was the rise of the Antichrist. Antichrist is not one man in one generation at the end of the Age, as the Premillennialist believes. It is a line of men, one following another in the same position, which we now know to be the Papacy. They introduced much false doctrine and false practice into the visible church of Jesus Christ; deceiving and corrupting many who, humanly speaking, would become Christians if they could only be taught the Bible correctly. Many of the clergy, the Bishops and Priests in the church of Rome, not only allowed these false doctrines to creep into the Church, but they also helped to promote them and thus the way was paved for the Roman Catholic Church to become the Beast which will be described in Chapter 13. This was, and is, the Great Apostasy; the falling away of the visible Church which is spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 3. The true Church of Jesus Christ was driven into the Wilderness. But she was given the "two wings of the great Eagle" to fly there. God Himself would provide a place for her, not in the great cathedrals of Rome and the 10 kingdoms of Europe, but in the valleys and mountains of many places in the Western Roman Empire. The true Church of Jesus Christ could not find a place for herself with a developing false church with false authorities over her. Satan would try, through this developing false Church to deceive and to persecute many believers within her own pale. In verse 15 of Chapter 12 it says, "So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood." So what I want to do this afternoon is to first of all, describe this flood. Then second I want to show how "the earth helped the woman." And I think that this is all that we will have time for.

1st of all - Let me describe the flood of water which the serpent spewed out of his mouth. (Verse 15)

What does the word "water" picture in this verse. This water is not pure water because it is being spewed out of the serpent's mouth. We know that the serpent represents Satan in his subtlety trying to deceive the true Church of Jesus Christ and anyone who would think about becoming a Christian. We all know that no one can live without water. Water is one of the essentials of life. Water as a symbol of true spiritual things, would represent the life-giving substance of the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the gracious influences of His Holy Spirit attending them as they are preached by faithful men. He who believes in Christ will never thirst. He, and the doctrines which proceed from His holy mouth are the Water of Life. In Revelation 22: 17 it says, "And the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'" "And let him who hears say come." "And let him who thirsts come." "Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." This the free offer of the gospel. Whoever desires to know God must believe this gospel by receiving the truth about Jesus Christ; His dying for sinners and being raised for their justification. They must receive His saving grace by faith in the gospel. How precious is this true gospel! How life-giving and soul saving! May we abide in it

and treasure it! Have each of you who are listening to me drunk from the wells of eternal salvation which is found in Jesus Christ? How precious and true are all the sayings of our Lord Jesus, His words of truth which we build our life upon. How precious is the pure Word of God which proceeds from His mouth. "Every word of God is pure; God is a shield to those who put their trust in Him." "Do not add to His Words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar," it says in Proverbs 30, verses 5 and 6.

But Satan has been a liar and the father of lies from the beginning. He would corrupt the pure Word of God. He would "spew water" from his perverse and hateful mouth which would destroy the souls of all men if he could. His water is the corrupt doctrines and practices which he would try to substitute for, or impose upon, the Pure Word of God and introduce into all the churches of Jesus Christ. Satan, in the days of the second and third time periods of Church History, worked and still works through the Popes and the Bishops and the Priests to introduce damning heresies into the visible Church and thus corrupt her entirely. This is the flood of water that the serpent spewed from his mouth. I would like to give to you some of the damnable heresies that the Popes and Bishops and Priests of the Roman Catholic Church introduced, and which that church still holds to in this 3rd time period of Church History. It is by this means of this flood of waters that Satan would flood the Church and carry her away to destruction. The only way that the true Church of Jesus Christ has, can, and will overcome this flood that the serpent spews out of his mouth is by "the blood of the Lamb and by the word of the Church's testimony, and by not loving our lives to the death," which is mentioned in verse 12 of our Chapter 12.

I want to take some quotations here from Harvey Newcombe's little book entitled, *The Great Apostasy* written back in 1833 for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. It is a very helpful little book. First of all, the Roman Catholic view of the Church, he says, has been entirely corrupted. "The true church of Christ properly consists of all real believers in Christ whose hearts have been changed by the Holy Spirit, whether they are called by the same name and united in the profession of exactly the same sentiments, or not." But "Rome holds that the true church of God upon the earth, consists of "a body of people united in the profession of the same Christian faith, in the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of lawful pastors, and particularly the Roman Pontiff, whom they call Christ's Vicar, or representative." "All who make this profession and submit to the authority of the Pope, whether good or bad, they say belong to the true Church, and are entitled to all its privileges." "According to this doctrine, if a body of men, professing the same Christian faith, should all become corrupt and wicked, they would still belong to the true Church." "In the Scriptures we are taught that Christ is the head of the Church; but nowhere, that he has given His place and power to the Pope." "On the contrary, our Savior has forbidden us to call any man "master" upon the earth; because one is our master, even Christ." (Matthew 23: 8) Now you can see how this doctrine of Papal authority is a

damning doctrine which sets the stage for the introduction of many errors and heresies. Christ is the only Head of His Church. He needs no Vicar at all since He is risen from the dead and has given us all the instructions that we as the true Church need, in the Bible, which is His infallible Word to the Church and through them to the World. But now, the Roman Catholic Pope claims to speak infallibly on all issues related to the doctrine and practice of the Church. At the Pope's will and whim all truth can be changed and the gospel itself perverted. And this is exactly what happened in the past, and continues to this day.

Listen to Harvey Newcombe again. "The church of Rome also claims the right of explaining scripture and tradition." "The people are not allowed to read the Bible, nor form their own opinions about what it teaches." (He is writing in 1833) "Everyone is obliged to believe just what the church believes." "This is, in fact, making the Pope supreme lord over the consciences of men." The Roman Catholics "also receive the Apocrypha as of equal authority with Scriptures." But -- "The Apocryphal books were never generally received as the Word of God, even by the church of Rome, till about the middle of the 16th century, when they were declared by the council of Trent to be a part of the Bible." "The same council made a law forbidding the use of any Bible but that called the Old Vulgate Latin." "This is a translation of the Original Greek and Hebrew in to Latin." "It is full of errors." "But even this is not allowed to the common people." "The reason is evident: If they were allowed to read the Holy Scriptures in their own language, they could not help seeing the glaring iniquities of Popery." "The influence of priests, and the authority of the Pope would soon be disregarded." "It is necessary, then, for the good of Popery, to keep them in ignorance." "They must not be allowed to think for themselves, but must believe just what the 'holy mother church' believes." This, I say, is a damning error in a number of ways. It takes the water of salvation away from the people and introduces in its place the waters of a flood which comes from the serpent's mouth. Our authority for all that we believe and all that we practice comes to us authoritatively from the Word of God itself. Our living risen Head, is alive and well and governing His true Church. He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high and ever lives to make intercession for us. The Papal system and the priesthood of the Roman Catholic church is founded on the heresy that something of man's authority apart from the Bible must be added in order for man to be saved and to enter Christ's church. This is the doctrine of Antichrist.

On the doctrine of Original sin, Newcombe says, "The Papists believe that, when Adam disobeyed God, he lost the purity and holiness in which he was first created, and became entirely sinful." "They also hold that he not only lost that original purity for himself alone, but for all mankind; and that we are all born with sinful natures." They except, however, the Virgin Mary, who they say was born without sin." "This original sin cannot be taken away by anything but the merits of Jesus Christ." "But, according to the church of Rome, the merits of Christ are applied in baptism." "The Papists hold, that, when a person is baptized, his heart is so entirely changed, that there is no sin at all in him." "This which is a

distinguishing feature of the whole system of Popery, subverts the first principles of the Christian religion." In a later sermon I will show how Rome's view of the doctrine of Justification does violence to the Scripture declaration of what the gospel and the way of salvation is. But let me quote Newcombe again. "The scriptural view of Justification by faith alone, was obscured, or darkened at an early period of the history of the Church." "Numerous ceremonies were introduced into the worship of God." "A strict attention to these began to be considered meritorious." "People also began to think they could merit the favor of God by practicing the austerities of the monastic life." "In proportion as these views prevailed, the doctrine of Justification by faith was overlooked and forgotten; till at last, God left them to believe their own lie, and trust in their own merits for salvation." I would say that this is how the serpent spewed water out of his mouth to cause the true Church of Jesus Christ to be carried away by the flood. **Now 2ndly- Let's look at how the earth helped the Woman.** (Verses 16 and 17)

"But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of her mouth." We have spoken of the "heaven" of Satan's strategies as being able to deceive and use Pagan Roman Emperors to persecute and waste the true Church of Jesus Christ. We saw that this strategy did not succeed ultimately and that the Church itself took that high ground away from Satan, to his great displeasure. Here at the end of the 2nd time period of Church History and moving into the 3rd, we find that the earth, which I believe is a word picture representing the visible church of that day, "helps the woman." That is, that God would by His sovereign purpose and power open up a way for these errors and heresies to be taken out the way by the pastor-teachers within the visible church, even the Roman Catholic church of those centuries from 800 A.D. on to the Reformation, and yes, even on to our present day and on to the Millennium. The visible Church of that day would drink down all of these errors and heresies. But even so, God would raise up men within this increasingly false church, men who would be able to "take in" all this deception and, because of their teaching against it, keep it from harming God's Elect people. These would be men who would take their stand for truth, and just like in the days of Moses and the people of God when they were threatened with the rebellion of the priests Korah, and Dathan and Abiram; they would speak to the issues of deception. There would be those within the visible church who would oppose this false priest Korah who wanted to be High Priest, and the others with him. They would look to God for the miraculous intervention which would keep these false priests and false leaders from taking the authority to themselves to set aside the God-appointed authority of Moses and Aaron and return to Egypt. God Himself did an entirely new thing. If you turn with me to Numbers 16: 29 you will see it. Moses and the children of Israel were the Old Testament church in the Wilderness. They were faced with a great rebellion against Moses' authority and God's good word to them through him. This is how Moses handled it. He took in all of their deceptive reasoning into

his mind and brought it before God in prayer and asked God to render judgment in their favor. "If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me," Moses says. "But if the Lord creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord." "Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with household and all the men with Korah, with all their goods." "So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly."

This I am saying is a Old Testament picture and type of what God would do for His New Testament Church in the Wilderness in the time period of the 1260 years of attempted Antichristian usurpation of Christ's righteous rule over His church. The earth would help the woman, the true Church of Jesus Christ and she would not be carried away by the flood of false doctrine that the Popes and the Bishops, and the Priests of these centuries would promote. And the true Church of Jesus Christ would be able to say with David in Psalm 124: 1, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, let Israel now say--If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters would have overwhelmed us, the stream would have gone over our soul; then the swollen waters would have gone over our soul." "Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth." "Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken and we have escaped." "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." The next time that we are together I will explain to you verse 17 and we look at the Beast rising up out of the sea.