



Remember why the Revelation was given to John – to encourage the church of Jesus in the last days – to encourage them to persevere, to not lose hope, but to be found faithful to God, to stand their ground.

v.12 – Therefore...

With this one word...we understand that a concluding statement is about to be made in light of what has been said in the preceding eleven verses.

What John saw in chapter 12 were not three independent, stand alone visions... but three visions that were inseparably connected to each other.

Scene One

v.1-6.



The sign of a pregnant woman.

This woman represents the people in relationship with God since the very beginning of time.

To these... were given promises from God of a Rescuer who would come.

From these... came the descendency of the Christ, God's Rescuer.

The sign of an enormous seven headed red dragon.



The size of the dragon and the number of his heads and the crowns he wore speak of his power and authority.

His color, red, speaks of what he uses his authority to do – to destroy and to kill.

The dragon represents the guardian cherub and other angels aligned with him, who rejected and rebelled against God in the distant past, and who, in doing so, were corrupted and became cruel and vicious.

The birth of a male child who will rule all the nations.



The child, unlike the woman and the dragon... is not a sign. The child himself is the reality.

The fact that the dragon positioned himself in order to kill the child at his birth tells us that the dragon knew who the child was... God's Rescuer... and rightly understood the child to be a grievous threat to his dominion of darkness.

The fact that the child was snatched up to God and to his throne tells us the child was successful in what he had come to the earth to do.

Scene Two

v.7-11.

This second scene adds important details and helps to explain the first.

There was war in heaven.

The great dragon and his angels were hurled out of heaven to the newly created earth and its first inhabitants, Adam and Eve.

Here on the earth, the dragon deceived our first parents and successfully tempted them to sin...



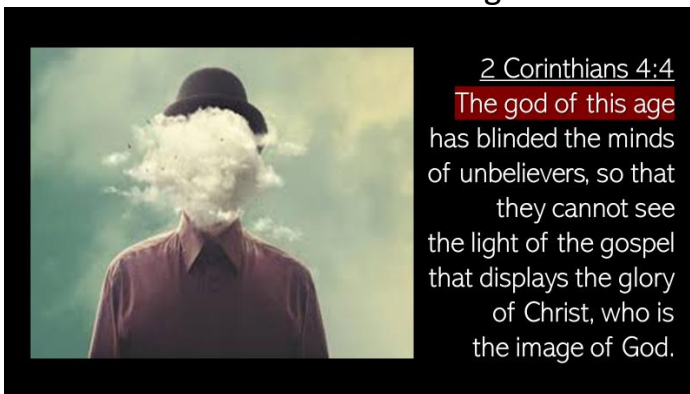
... though Adam and Eve were held responsible by God for the choice they made.

The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve acted on behalf of us all – what that means is that they did what we would have done had we been them.

As a result, sin corrupted their human nature and through procreation sin was passed on to their children and in turn to their children’s children and so on.

When they spiritually fell, the dragon additionally usurped the authority which God had entrusted to humanityto steward, that is to care for the earth and its creatures, as God would if he were them.

This was when and how the dragon became... in the words of 2 Corinthians 4:4...

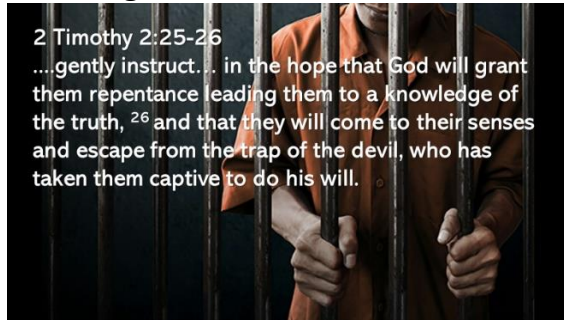


... **“the god of this age...”**

The dragon had aspired to take the place of God and to be God.

But when he failed and was driven out of heaven, he maliciously used the abilities he had been given when God created him... **“to lead the whole world astray.”**

The dragon... blinded as 2 Corinthians 4 says and cruelly took humanity captive...

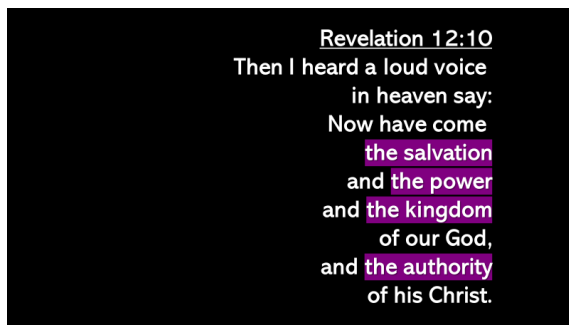


2 Timothy 2:25-26
...gently instruct... in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

... to do his will.

This is the human condition.

But the child who was born to the woman...look at v.10...

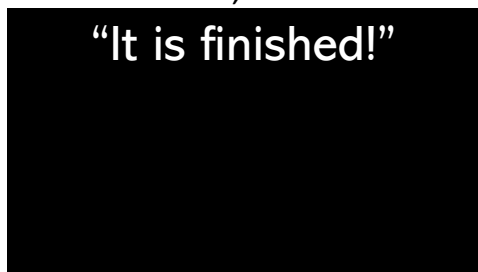


...brought into the world... because of who he was... the salvation and the power and the authority and the kingdom of God.

The child born to the woman was humanity's Rescuer.

The child came to do what human beings could not do for themselves.

From the cross, before he bowed his head and gave up his spirit, Jesus said...



It is finished... means...

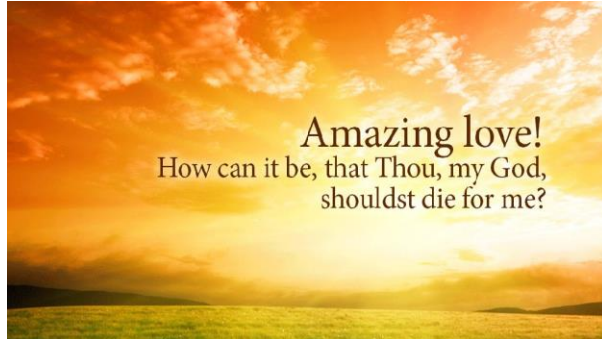


The child born to the woman...

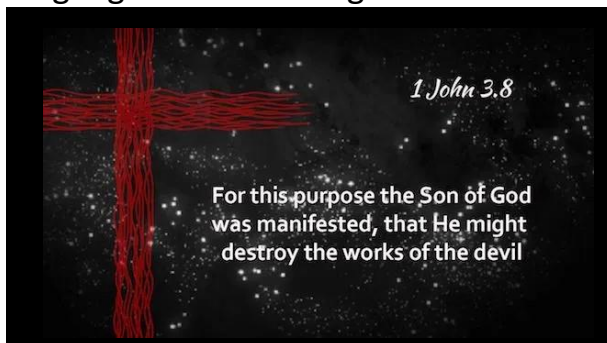
- the child the dragon tried to kill...
- the child caught up to God and his throne...

...paid in full humanity's sin debt.

In response to this great act of love, one hymn writer wrote...



By his death upon the cross and his resurrection from the dead, this child, God's Messiah, redeemed men and women from every nation, people, tribe and language... and in doing so...



...destroyed the work of the dragon.

As we read and studied last week... the followers of Jesus overcome the dragon by grace... through faith... in the blood of the Lamb.

This is the testimony of those saved by Jesus.

And now we come to...

Scene Three

v.12 – Therefore, rejoice, you heavens and all who dwell in them!

Why does heaven rejoice?

Because the war that had been fought in heaven long ago; the war that had been brought to the earth by the dragon and his angels has been won, as v.11 says.... by the Lamb, who...



All who are in heaven see... the victorious Lamb seated on the Throne.

They see him ruling from heaven over the earth.

All who are in heaven witness the great multitude that no one can count who have trusted in Jesus Christ and are now safe in the Father's home.

Every person saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, is proof that the power of the dragon has been broken and that his reign is coming to an end...and that soon he will be hurled out of the earth just as he was hurled out of heaven.

The voice in heaven had more to say.

v.12b - But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.

The voice in heaven recognizes... that the distress and misfortune... which comes upon the earth and the sea... is because "the devil has been hurled down."

The devil knows that the victory of the cross will soon bring about his utter ruin, and his expulsion from the earth into the lake of fire.

This is why he reacts with such fury.

He hates God.

During the 1990 Gulf War...



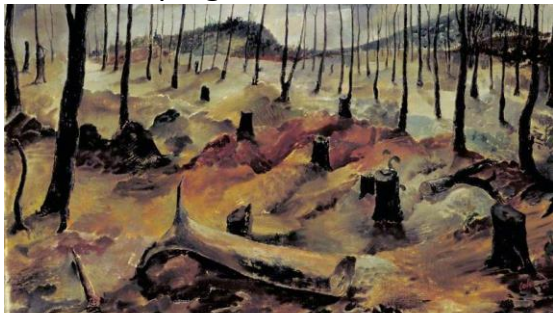
...after Iraqi forces were driven out of Kuwait, the retreating Iraqi army set more than 600 Kuwaiti oil wells on fire as part of a scorched-earth policy. They did so with great malice in order to cause damage and harm.

The devil has been defeated.

He cannot undo what the cross of Christ has accomplished.

He cannot harm God.

But in this present time, the devil is active trying to bring about his own scorched earth campaign.



It is here that wisdom from heaven is required.

The tendency of humanity today... who live as if God doesn't exist or matter... is to attribute everything that is going wrong in the earth to global warming caused by the excess use of carbon.

But the Scripture tells us of two significant factors that are at work in the earth.

The first is here in v.12 - the fury of the devil... who in hatred of God is active to ruin God's creation.

The second is found in Romans 8:20-22.

Why is There Evil and Suffering?

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Romans 8:20–22

This passage explains that the sin of Adam and Eve resulted in the creation being cursed by God with futility and decay.

This curse causes... the whole creation to groan... like a woman in childbirth.

This is a second primary reason why things are not right in the world.

But look at the hope expressed in Romans 8.

When Jesus appears, not only will he resurrect our bodies to be like his glorious resurrected body, he will also set the creation free from its bondage to decay ... and make everything new.

**“No more death,
no more mourning,
no more crying,
no more pain.”**

Revelation 21:4

Look at v.13.

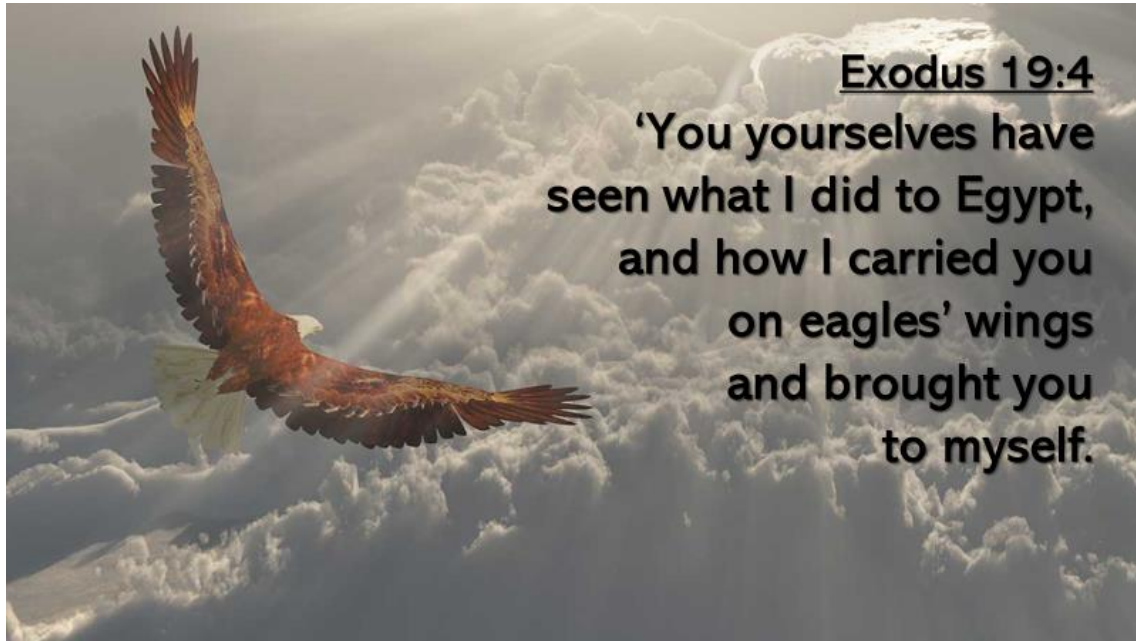
It is not just the creation on which the dragon vents his fury.

He also vents his anger upon the woman who represents the people of God.

Look at v.14.

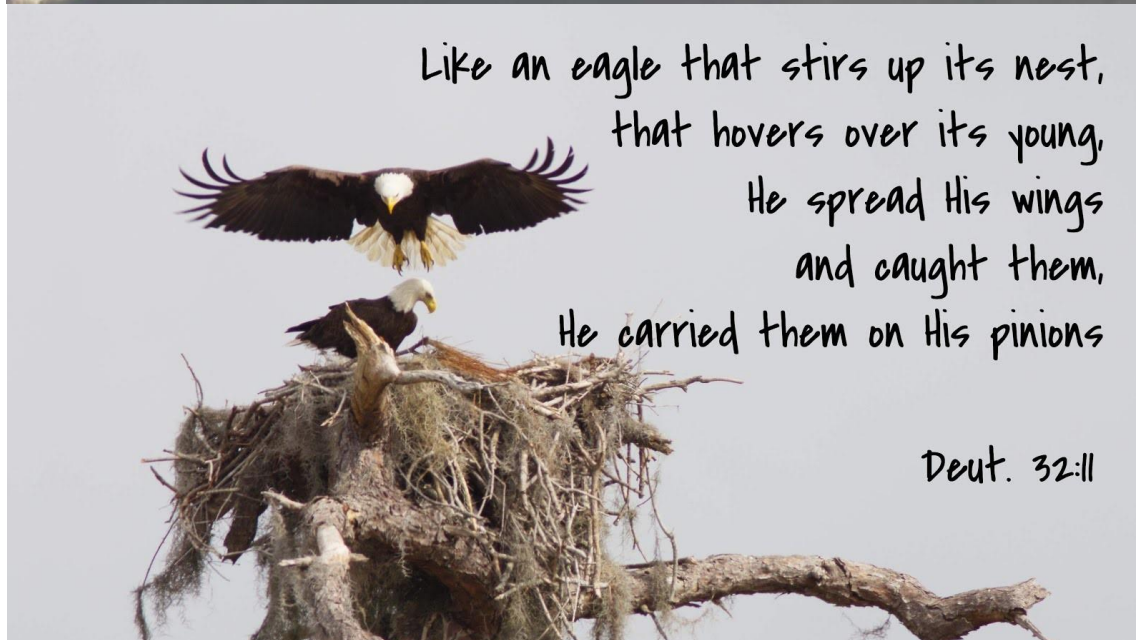
The imagery of v.14 is steeped in the OT.

Gerhard Krodel writes, "The eagle's wings evoke the declarations made by God in Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 32."



Exodus 19:4

**'You yourselves have
seen what I did to Egypt,
and how I carried you
on eagles' wings
and brought you
to myself.'**



*Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
that hovers over its young,
He spread His wings
and caught them,
He carried them on His pinions*

Deut. 32:11

God miraculously rescued the nation of Israel from an impossible situation – slavery in Egypt.

God carried his people on an impossible journey - 40 years through a vast and dreadful desert, a thirsty and waterless land. See Deuteronomy 8:15

What God did then for his people... he has continued to do throughout history.

In the last days, God wants the people of his church to know that he...

God keeps his people...
“out of the serpent’s reach.”

Revelation 12:14

As followers of Jesus, we need to think much upon this promise in Revelation 12:14... and allow it to seep in and saturate our hearts and minds.

The people of God are kept by God....

The people of God are kept out of the serpent’s reach...

This was the testimony of the apostle Paul.

He said to Timothy....

2 Timothy 4:16-18

- At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

When everyone deserted Paul... who stood at his side?

The Lord.

Who was it that delivered Paul from the lion’s mouth?

The Lord.

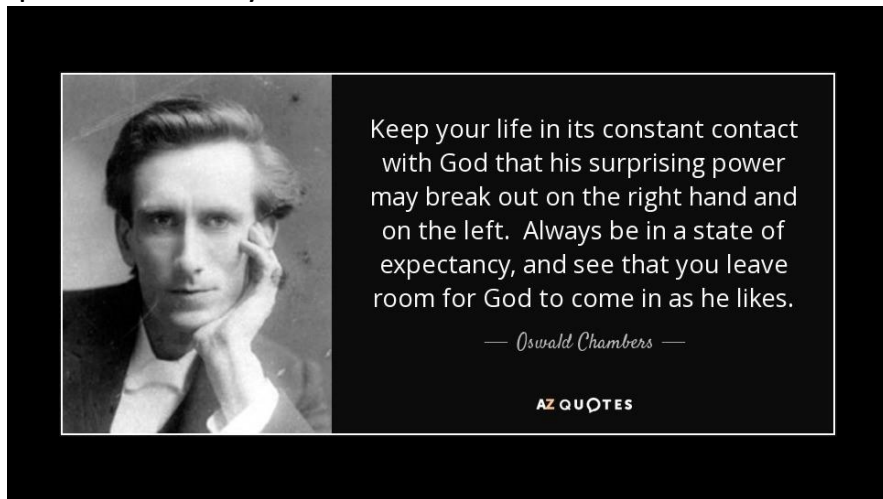
Regarding future evil attacks - who did Paul depend upon and look to for rescue?

The Lord.

Who would bring Paul safely home to the Father’s kingdom?

The Lord.

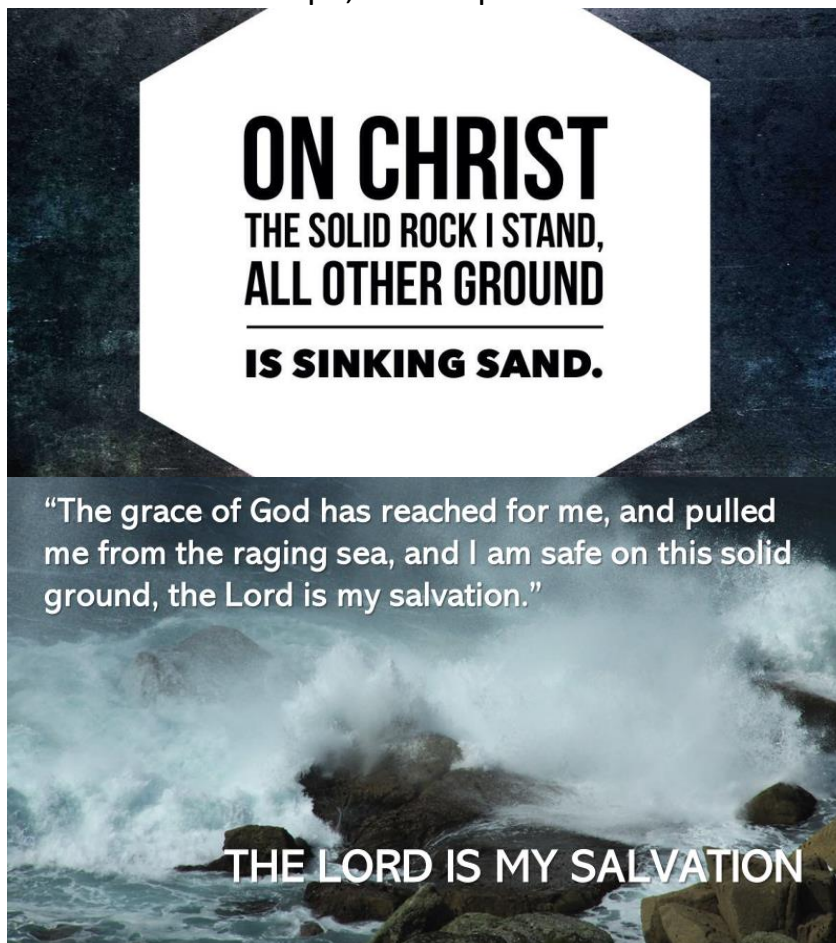
As I thought upon this this truth... the keeping power of God... I came across a quote written by Oswald Chambers.



This is our reality – God is our sanctuary.

His powerful presence... keeps us.

We sing of this truth in numerous songs... songs that strengthen our faith; that remind us of our hope; that inspire us to hold on to Christ and to persevere.



With our lives built upon and rooted in Jesus...we live, as Chamber's wrote... with a state of expectancy.

Expectancy of what?

That God's surprising power will break out... on the right and on the left... in the ways he chooses... in order to sustain and to care for us in the varying circumstances of our life, but particularly... to guard us from the dragon's fury.

Look at v.15.

In the vision John saw... the dragon was frustrated by how God provided a way of escape for his people.

This is why the dragon then spewed water like a river from his mouth... in order to overtake God's people and sweep them away.

What does the water that comes out of the dragon's mouth represent?



The dragon in v.9 is called the devil – which means slanderer.

In v.10 the dragon is referred to as the accuser.

In John 8:44 Jesus said of the devil... **“...there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”**

I've mentioned this before...but it illustrates what verse 15 is talking about.

My experience in the Sooke River kayaking.

When my kayak was flipped over, my danger was not the depth of the water, but the strength of the current which threatened to sweep me into the rocks of that particular rapid.

This is the intent of the dragon... he spews slander, accusation and lies... in order to move the follower of Jesus off of and away from their rootedness in Christ. But here again for those in Christ there is rescue... that surprises.

Look at v.16.

This scene is meant to bring to mind other deliverances of God in the OT time.

Psalm 74:12-17

¹² But God is my King from long ago; he brings salvation on the earth. ¹³ It was you who split open the sea by your power; **you broke the heads of the monster in the waters.**

¹⁴ **It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan** and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert.

¹⁵ It was you who opened up springs and streams;

you dried up the ever-flowing rivers. ¹⁶ The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and

moon. ¹⁷ **It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;** you made both summer and winter.

As God was in the OT, so God is... in the last days.

God is faithful.

Not 50% of the time.

Not even 90% of the time.

God is faithful 100% of the time.

Hurled down from heaven, then hurled down by the cross... look at v.17... the dragon refuses to give up, and in a great rage... continues to wages war against those who “obey God’s commands and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

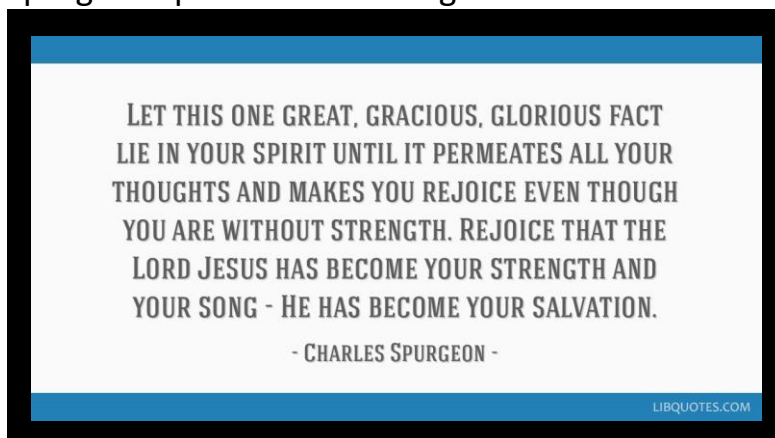
In the visions shown to John in Revelation 12, God wants his church to know that a great adversary... wars... against them.

That said, the Scripture... in Revelation 12 and in many other passages... reveals the schemes of the dragon – his game plan and strategies.



God doesn't reveal these things in order to make his people afraid. He reveals them to us... in order that we would live wisely and with confidence in the Lamb who having saved us... keeps us... to the very end.

In Ephesians 6:10 we are told to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Just as the righteousness of Christ is given to us by faith, so is the strength of God. Spurgeon spoke of this strength ...



As the apostle Paul filled his mind and heart with this truth... he was led by the Spirit to this conclusion...



The church faces an unseen foe.

But what fills our hearts and minds... is Christ... and his sufficiency.

Because Christ keeps us, because he never leaves nor forsakes us... the testimony of Paul is ours as well – we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Ephesians 6:11 tells the believer to put on the full armour of God.

What are we to then do having put on this armour?

Ephesians 6:11

...take your stand against the devil's schemes.

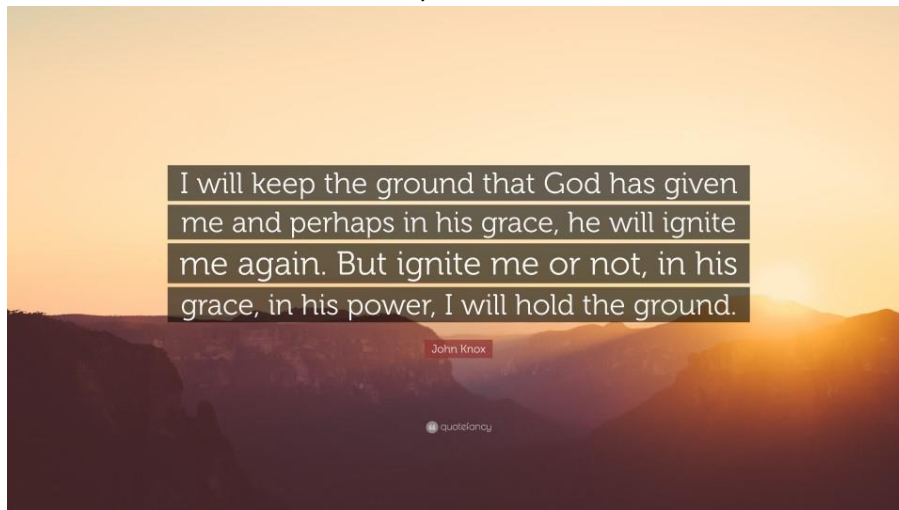
Ephesians 6:13

...stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Ephesians 6:14

Stand firm then...

As John Knox thought upon these Scriptures and their implications to his life and the circumstances he faced, he wrote...



What is of great importance followers of Jesus... is not simply that we hold ground...but how we hold that ground.

In a time of pandemic God would have his people stand firm... to live as a people who've taken on the yoke of Christ; a people saturated by gentleness and humility; a people whose souls find rest in God alone.

In this present time, followers of Jesus - we are cared for, provided for, protected by our God....in surprising and unexpected ways.

To God be the glory! Great things he has done!