

Satan, A Defeated Enemy

Memory Text: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12:11).

Setting The Stage: A reporter was interviewing an old man on his 100th birthday. “What are you most proud of?” he asked. “Well, ” said the man, “I don’t have an enemy in the world.” “What a beautiful thought! How inspirational!” said the reporter. “Yep,” added the centenarian, “outlived every last one of them.”

There is one enemy, however, that no one has been able to outlive. Revelation 12, our study today, focuses on this enemy, but more than that, it outlines for us the history of the great cosmic conflict that began in heaven and came here to planet earth.

So far in Revelation we have spent time looking at what mostly constitutes the historical portion of Revelation; that is, mostly historical to us living today. Of course, it was all future for John and the first readers of the book of Revelation. The seventh church, the sixth and seventh seal, and the seventh trumpet refer to our present day. Some of their content refers to Christ’s coming.

What comes next—Revelation 13-22—is mostly future to us living today. Some of it is historical to provide a context to last-day events, but the focus of the last chapters of Revelation points to what is to come. Our confidence in the fulfillment of the last part of the book of Revelation lies in the recognition of the incredible fulfillment of those things prophesied about in the first half of the book of Revelation.

Revelation 12 explains why the historical defeats and victories of God’s people as portrayed in the previous chapters existed, and why the future apparent defeats and ultimate victory of God’s people as portrayed in future chapters exist. This chapter pulls back the curtain on the unseen, allowing us to see the forces at play in the history and future of God’s people. The chapter also provides assurance that God cares for His people and that if faithful to Him will be victorious in the end.

Keep in mind while reviewing this chapter of the book of Revelation that the story line of the great controversy doesn’t advance chronologically. Instead there’s a kind of living kaleidoscope or animated montage that carries us suddenly forward and backward in order to bring about the desired impression.

Overview: Revelation 12 begins with a symbolic ideal mother projected onto the screen of the sky. Sun, moon, and stars add to her beauty. She is pregnant and ready to give birth. But another player on the scene emerges. It’s a great red dragon ready to grab the baby the minute it appears. Miraculously, the baby is protected

and is caught up to God's throne. The dragon then seeks to attack the mother. And when the mother is miraculously protected, the dragon goes after her other children. Having lost mother and baby he doesn't want the other children to get away.

Perhaps you heard the story about the farm owner who often hunted ducks. "Sam," he said one day to his assistant, "you're a good Christian, but you're always telling me about the problems you have with the devil. I don't make any claim to being a Christian, yet the devil never gives me any trouble. How do you explain the difference?" "Sir," the assistant responded humbly, "when you go hunting, which ducks do you send me after first, the one's you've killed or the wounded ones that might get away?" The farm owner got the point.

Revelation 12 makes the same point. The children of the true mother have been brought up to "keep the commandments of God" (Rev. 12:17). They're the special objects of Satan's attacks. They're alive. They still might get away from him. Sometimes the mother's efforts to bring them up seem to be in vain, because the enemy makes "war" with her children. But it's not in vain, because when you get to Rev. 14 there they are, her victorious children, singing praises to God with the Lamb on Mount Zion. Rev. 19:7-9 tells us that the mother triumphs with them.

There's wonderful assurances here for any mother, any parent concerned about their children in a hostile world where the enemy claims rule. With the right help and knowing the right Person (Jesus), they too can be victorious over the allurements and temptations the enemy suggests to them.

Sunday - The Woman & The Dragon

Revelation 12:1-5, 9

Revelation 12:1-5. These verses remind us immediately about Eve, the promised Seed, and the lying serpent. The woman represents God's people. In the OT, the people of Israel as a whole are referred to as a woman, and sometimes as an unfaithful wife (Hos. 2:19, 20; Isa. 54:1-8). At other times, Israel is referred to as a beautiful young woman God has chosen as His bride (Ezek. 16:8-14). In the NT, the Christian church as a whole is spoken of as a bride (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:21-23). But God doesn't have two brides He only has the one.

V. 1 - The woman is clothed with the sun of God's righteousness (Mal. 4:2; Rev. 19:8), symbolic of God's faithful church, a family filled with children of "light" (Luke 16:8; 1 Thess. 5:5-8). She is standing on the moon of the sacrificial services that reflected the light of the "Sun of righteousness" who was to come. Her garland of twelve stars represent the twelve apostles who crowned the early church with success as she sought to shine the light of the gospel in a dark world.

V. 2, 5 - The woman is ready to give birth to a "man child." Eagerly God's people of the OT waited for the arrival of the Messiah, and as prophesied He arrived on time

(Gal. 4:4). We know that this Child is none other than Christ as only one child was predicted to rule all nations, and only one person was caught up to God and His throne (Ps. 2:8, 9; Rev. 19:13-16; Heb. 1:3; 10:12).

V. 3, 4 – We know the red dragon represents the devil (see. v. 9), and he is standing before the woman ready to devour or destroy the child she is about to give birth to. Who on earth does the dragon stand for? If we know the Christmas story we know that King Herod sent soldiers to Bethlehem to destroy all the baby boys there, hoping to kill Jesus. Herod's soldier's missed Him because God warned his parents in a dream to escape to Egypt. King Herod was a puppet of Rome. Rome was acting on behalf of Satan

V. 6 – Frustrated in his attempt to kill the Son, the dragon turned his hatred against the Son's mother. But the woman escaped to the wilderness, to a place prepared by God where she would be nourished for 1,260 day-years. The 1260 years is the same time period spoken about by Daniel (Dan. 7:25), and refers to the time of Papal supremacy during the Dark Ages.

Reference to the "wilderness" reminds us of Israel's OT escape from Egypt where God nourished His people with manna, and Elijah's escape from King Ahab for 1,260 days (3 ½ years) where the ravens and the widow of Zarephath miraculously nourished him.

While the dragon beholds the "man child" being caught up to God and the woman fleeing from his presence, obvious moments of defeat for the dragon, the scene suddenly changes to his original demise, as if to remind him and us, that once a defeated foe, always a defeated foe.

Monday – Satan Cast Down to Earth

Revelation 12:7-9

John now quickly presents the history of the great controversy between Christ and Satan in heaven, from its origin to the time of Christ's victory on the cross (Col. 2:14, 15), the final casting out of Satan at that time to earth (Rev. 12:10-12), and the course of the controversy on earth all the way down to the time of the end (Rev. 12:13-16).

Revelation 12:7-9. It's hard to believe war started in heaven. We know who the dragon is, but who is Michael? Michael means, "Who is like God". We first read about Michael in the book of Daniel. He is none other than Jesus Christ (cp. Jude 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:16; GC 272-275). But He is only an Angel in the sense of being God's supreme messenger. After all He is the Word of God. And this doesn't mean Michael is a created being anymore than when Son of God came to this earth as a human

being and was given the name Jesus. He was God in human flesh then, and always will be God.

When did this war in heaven take place? By inserting the story here it makes it sound like it took place after the 1,260 years (A.D. 1798). But the OT shows that the war took place a long time ago, even before the creation of this planet. In Ezekiel 28:12-17, Ezekiel records that one of the living creatures that originally gathered about God's throne had already been cast out of heaven, and the book of Ezekiel was written around 600 B.C. Also, in Gen. 3, at the dawn of our planet millennia ago, we are introduced to the enemy of man in the Garden of Eden, already cast out of heaven and already a devil.

Cherishing primary love for himself and the desire to have and take all of the prerogatives of God (Ezek. 28:12-16; Isa. 14:12-14) led to this great battle for the loyalty of heavenly beings between Christ and Satan. Eventually a third of the angels sided with Lucifer, and they were ultimately evicted from heaven prior to the creation of this world (PP 36-42; EW 145, 146; GC 498-500; 3SG 36-39). At an attempt to get back at God, Satan sought to usurp the authority given to Adam when he was created. Sadly, he was successful.

But now something significant is introduced reminding us of that first announcement that the Seed would come to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). **Revelation 12:10-12.** When did this second casting out take place? Obviously, it came after a period during which Satan had been accusing the "brethren," thus not referring to the original casting out. It seems Satan was still allowed access to heavenly beings (Job 1:6, 7; EW 290), although he was not permitted back into heaven (DA 761; SR 26, 27). Not all of the heavenly beings fully understood the devil's ultimate goal, so time was given to allow the fruit of his rebellion to fully mature so there would be no question about his final destruction, no doubt about the character of God.

It was on the cross that Christ triumphed over Satan. The plan of "salvation" was made sure, "strength" was provided for resisting the devil's temptation, Christ's "kingdom" was guaranteed, and his "power" (literally, "authority") to be our Savior, high priest, and king was confirmed (Matt. 28:18; GC 503). Satan's purposes had been exposed. The heavenly intelligences could clearly see the lengths to which he would go to get what he wanted. Any remaining affections for him ended. He was cast down. But not until the second coming will Satan be confined to this earth where for 1,000 years he will have to bear witness to the incredible destruction he has caused (Rev. 20:1-3).

John 12:31, 32: "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." (cp. Col. 2:14, 15)

The main point though in Rev. 12 is not the time when these casting's out occurred (although we can know when they did) but the fact that the devil was and is a defeated foe. The passage says it repeatedly (vv. 9, 10). And even though the devil goes on accusing us "day and night" (he's not very creative, but he is effective) he power is limited and his time is short. By virtue of the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and their willingness to die rather than disappoint their Lord we can overcome the enemy.

Now the scene changes again, and seems to go back to when the dragon beheld the man-child ascend victorious to heaven and the woman fleeing from his presence. After that brief and painful reminder of his fall, it's as if he shakes his head to bring him back to the here and now, and with the determination not to fail again, the dragon pursues the woman.

Tuesday - The War On Earth

Revelation 12:13-16

Revelation 12:13-16. During the 1,260 years of Papal supremacy the serpent poured water like a flood out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away. But the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river. In Bible prophecy water represents multitudes of people. This water from the dragon's mouth could represent the armies that at times were commissioned by the Church of Rome for the purpose of persecution.

The "earth" that swallowed up the water could represent relatively uninhabited areas to which persecuted Christians fled for safety. It is well known that many Christians found relief from persecution by fleeing to the high mountain valleys of the Alps and to the sparsely populated British colonies in North America.

The language used in this prophecy seems to be taken from the story of the great flood found in Gen. 6-9. If God hadn't protected Noah and his family, the waters of the flood would have swept away any promise of the arrival of Jesus as the woman's special Seed. But thankfully, God did protect this family and thus preserved the entire human family. When the flood had lasted long enough the waters were "dried up from the earth" (Gen. 8:13).

In Rev. 12:14 God preserves the woman (God's church) from being swept away by providing her not with Noah's ark but with two wings of a great eagle. Immediately your mind probably goes back to the OT and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt when Moses told the people that God had carried them on "eagles wings" (Ex. 19:4). He had born them on His "everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27). God's powerful, loving arms preserved Noah's family from the flood, protected Israel during the Exodus, and guarded God's church during the 1,260 years. And if He could do it for them, He will do it for us today.

Wednesday – War Against The Remnant

Revelation 12:17

Revelation 12:17. Having failed to destroy the children of the woman during the 1,260 years, he makes one last ditch effort to destroy the “remnant of her seed” in the hopes that he can destroy God’s true church. Satan’s demonic desperation helps explain why it is that when we raise our children in Christian homes and then send them into the world, they would have a terrible time fighting temptation. It also explains why we see inconsistencies in God’s church today. It’s not an excuse to say that, it’s a valid reason as to why we see the existence of false teachings, insubordination, lack of faith in God’s promises, worldliness, and a compromising spirit in the church today.

How are God’s last-day people identified? 1. Keep the commandments of God; 2. Have the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit or gift of prophecy (Rev. 19:10; 22:9). Later in Rev. 14:6-12 they bear a last-day message to go to the entire world.

So if you were looking for God’s last-day people to be a part of, you would want to look for a church that visibly emerged after 1798, keeps all of His commandments, has the gift of prophecy manifest in its midst, is a world-wide movement, proclaims the everlasting gospel and the three angels messages, and has the faith of Jesus. And there is only one church in all the world that meets this description. The Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The term “remnant” is pregnant with meaning. In the ancient Middle East, tribes and even whole nations frequently faced extinction from famine or aggressive enemies. They found comfort in hoping that a “remnant” would survive any catastrophe, for the remnant would carry the potential for restoring and renewing the tribe or nation.

Noah survived the flood and thus prevented the entire human race from being annihilated. The remnant preserved and restored the human race. Also, the exiles that returned from Babylon restored the fortunes of the Jewish race.

In the Bible, God preserves the remnant (Gen. 45:7; Isa. 10:20, 21; 37:21, 32). The prophets Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Obadiah, and Zephaniah speak of a remnant who survive overwhelming last-day disasters. Those “lame” and “outcast” to begin with (Micah 4:7; Zeph. 3:19), they are forgiven all their sins (Jer. 50:20) and found to be without iniquity (Jer. 50:20; Isa. 4:2-5), and free from all lies (Zeph. 3:13). They stand on Mount Zion (Micah 4:7; Isa. 4:2-5; Obad. 1:17; Joel 2:32), in the presence of God with the sound of singing (Zeph. 3:14-17). This group in the book of Revelation is known as the 144,000 (Rev. 14:1-5).

Thursday – Satan’s End-Time Strategy

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12; Revelation 13:13, 14; 19:20

Satan promises the best, but pays with the worst; he promises honor and pays with disgrace; he promises pleasure and pays with pain; he promises profit and pays with loss; he promises life and pays with death. What did the devil do for anyone?

Read **2 Thessalonians 2:8–12** along with **Revelation 13:13, 14** and **Revelation 19:20**. What is the nature of Satan’s end-time deception?

Revelation 12–20 portrays Satan, endeavoring to deceive the world (see Rev. 12:9, 13:14, 18:23, 19:20, 20:8). He uses, in turn, political and religious powers to do his work: pagan Rome, symbolized by the dragon (Rev. 12:4, 5); followed by a power symbolized by the sea beast (Rev. 12:6, 15; Rev. 13:1–8); and, finally, a power symbolized by the earth beast (Rev. 13:11).

Throughout the rest of the book, the members of this satanic triad—paganism/spiritualism as symbolized by the dragon; Roman Catholicism, symbolized by the sea beast; and apostate Protestantism, symbolized by the lamblike, or earth beast—are inseparably united in opposing God’s activities in the world. They work together to deceive people, in order to turn them away from God and to get them to side with Satan in the “battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:13, 14, NKJV).

These false religious systems will be destroyed together at the Second Coming (Rev. 19:20), while the dragon, symbolizing the devil, who worked through these earthly powers (Rev. 12:9), will be destroyed at the end of the thousand years (Rev. 20:10). Revelation shows that the end-time deception will be so great that most people will be led to choose the way of destruction (Matt. 7:13). (Read GC, Snares of Satan)