

“THE DEFEAT OF THE DRAGON.”

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Scripture Texts: Revelation 12:7-17

Introduction.

We resume where we left off in chapter 12. The cast of players is the same. There is the great red, seven-headed dragon who is Satan. There is the woman who is OT Israel and NT church, meaning the people of God in all ages. There is the child born who is Christ.

In 12:5 we had the summary of the life of Christ from birth to ascension. Now we have the ramifications of that life described in detail.

The scene described here in this vision is not the fall of Satan around the time of creation, but the defeat of Satan in the crucifixion and resurrection.

With the cross came sweeping consequences not just personally and not just globally, but cosmically.

The War in Heaven with Christ, vss. 7-12.

There was a war in heaven, a great cosmic conflict. God takes this war with a deadly seriousness. This is not a small conflict, this isn't just a misunderstanding or disagreement. This is war, a life and death struggle with the eternal destiny of souls at stake.

I Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Satan is called by four names, the great dragon, the ancient serpent, the one who is called the devil, and Satan.

He is the deceiver of the whole world. Satan doesn't do anything positive, he offers nothing good of himself, he has nothing original. He only takes what is God's, what is true and good and then turns it upside down, he deceives, he makes counterfeits, fakes, imitations.

He is the deceiver of the whole world, not just of some people, but of everyone one. He is the deceiver of me and you and everyone we know and everyone in the whole world.

When we don't understand why someone doesn't see the truth or come to Christ, we must understand that behind them is a deceiver blinding the eyes and hearts of people.

Satan's power was in his accusations. Before the cross, Satan's accusations had legal force because of the law's requirement for justice and payment of sin.

Satan had some access to heaven until the time of Christ's ascension. He is the adversary, the prosecutor who comes before the Judge in the law court of God. He arraigns men before God, bringing charges. He goes to and fro over the earth collecting evidence and when there is no evidence then bringing temptations so there can be some evidence. As with Job.

Job 1:6-7 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

Job 2:1-2 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

But this access appears to change with the ascension. This is the first appearance of *Michael, the archangel*. In Daniel he is called the prince of Israel. He may be the great prince in charge of the people of God (Daniel 10:21).

After Jesus' victory, Michael is given the task of expelling Satan from heaven. Michael and his angelic hosts are stronger than Satan and his demonic hosts.

Luke 10:18 He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Perhaps more than a military battle, this is a legal battle between two great lawyers. Having lost his biggest case, he loses his job. Satan ends up disbarred and thrown out of the courtroom of God.

The loud voice in heaven.

The voice is not identified, but it gives the theological content, the truth about what is happening and why. The announcement is a declaration of victory won by the blood of the Lamb. The real battle is on the cross. That's where the blood is shed.

The worshipers and beings around the throne celebrating the victory of Christ and the final and decisive defeat of Satan. This is cause for worship and rejoicing and singing and praise and dancing and clapping.

The war is won, but the battle continues until the end comes. While Satan is disbarred and has no rights in heaven, he still has his power to wreck as much havoc as he can in his final death throes.

This is a word of encouragement for saints and martyrs in heaven and on earth. The time is coming and the time will be cut short. This is good news and hope for those in captivity, those in refugee camps, those under the threat of terrorism, those suffering persecution. For Christians in Syria, Iran and Iraq, Somalia and Sudan, in Egypt and Nigeria, in China, in North Korea. In all the -stans.

This song is another verse in a long song of progressive victory that began in Genesis 3:15 and sounded again in the covenant with Abraham and the deliverance of Moses and the covenant with David and in all the prophecies and with the birth of Jesus and His death and resurrection and ascension. The day is fast approaching when the final verse will be sung in heaven.

Christ's victory over death means hope for those facing certain death. Death is not defeat for the Christian, but further victory.

The War on Earth with Christ's People, vs. 13-17.

Satan never ceases, having failed in heaven and lost his place there, he makes war on earth against the people of Christ. Since he couldn't devour the child, he comes to devour the mother.

12:13-17 is a detailed description of 12:6.

When deceit fails, he persecutes. He relentlessly pursues his hateful destruction.

The utter depravity of Satan is seen in that knowing his power is limited and his time is short, he refuses to repent or change, but hopelessly and recklessly and with greater intensity pours out his wrath against God's people and God's creation.

Eagle's wings.

This is where Hal Lindsey gets his idea: “Some kind of massive airlift will rapidly transport these fleeing Jews across the rugged terrain to their place of protection. Since the eagle is the national symbol of the United States, it’s possible that the airlift will be made available by aircraft from the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean” (179).

This is an OT allusions that take us back to Mount Sinai.

Exodus 19:4 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

God Himself took care of and carried His people, providing protection and nourishment for His people in the wilderness, food and water. The gates of hell cannot prevail because the gates of heaven protect the church.

Serpent pours out, earth swallows up.

These are more OT allusions. In Ezekiel 29:3 Pharaoh is called the great dragon pouring out wrath, trying to kill the male children, then pursuing the whole nation. In Exodus Israel escaped the flood of the Egyptians through the Red Sea, and then God made the earth swallow up the pursuers.

Exodus 15:12 You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them.

God delivered His people out on dry land. Later in the wilderness “the earth opened its mouth and swallowed” the families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram because of their resistance to Moses’ leadership (Num. 16:12-14; Deut. 11:5-6; Ps. 106:17).

Some think since the waters come from Satan’s mouth it is a reference to heresies, slander, blasphemes and lies, Satan trying to destroy the church through false teaching and false doctrine. Perhaps this is a reference to the river of lies spewing from Satan’s mouth through the synagogues of Satan in the seven churches in chapter 2 and 3.

Application and conclusion.

Christ is the center of Revelation. The cross is central to Revelation. As the cross is always relevant, so Revelation is always relevant.

Revelation was written not to divide or confuse, but to encourage, edify, lead to godliness and comfort, both now and eternally. Revelation is ammunition for spiritual warfare.

Do you believe in dragons? You should. There is an unseen dragon roaming around this earth looking to devour victims, to steal and kill and destroy (John 10:10).

Satan is old, one of the oldest created things in the universe. He is old and crafty and experienced, and cunning. He is very good at what he does.

He is powerful and deceptive, he is threatening and he is mad. He knows his time is short and his cause is a lost cause and his end is certain. He isn't here to negotiate. He hates God, he hates Jesus, he hates all that is true and good. He hates the church and he hates Christians.

Do you ever feel guilt and shame? Do you ever feel condemnation? Do you ever feel covered up with the lies and accusations of Satan? Do you ever find yourself listening to lies and even starting to believe his lies about you or Jesus or your salvation or your assurance? Is Satan making war on you?

What should you do? Answer like Jesus did. Get thee behind me, Satan. Satan, you are a liar, go back to hell. If we are in Christ, we have Christ's authority to resist and rebuke Satan. We can throw down Satan in a manner similar to what Michael did.

Because of Christ's victory, Christians can also claim and have victory over Satan and sin.

I Corinthians 15:57-58 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Ephesians 6:10-11, 13 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ... 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

I John 5:4-5 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Flee to Jesus and the gospel and you will be safe. All who trust in Jesus are carried on eagle's wings.

Spiritual Warfare:

What does it mean to overcome the devil and throw him down? Notice three things in the song.

We have this victory through the blood of the Lamb, vs. 11.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

We claim and proclaim the truth and power of the cross. Self-reliance is deadly, Christ-reliance is life-sustaining.

Satan's accusations against us before God are true, we are guilty. He knows our sin, our dark secrets. His accusations have power until we claim the blood of the Lamb as our redemption. There is no accusation that cannot be paid for and covered and thrown down by the blood of Jesus. There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

We have this victory through the Word of our testimony, through the Truth, vs. 11

Satan is turned back by the Gospel, by the truth concerning Jesus Christ. Truth defeats the deception of the devil. Satan is thrown down by the sword of the Spirit.

One of Satan's strongest tactics is to convince us we are not who we are in Christ and that we cannot do what He has saved us to do.

He lies and deceives to convince us we are worthless sinners, an embarrassment to Christ, worse than other Christians, too bad for God to listen, and helpless to ever change, beyond hope. And there is truth in that, it's true apart from Christ I am nothing and without God in this world. But thanks be to God in His grace and mercy while I was still a sinner He loved me and redeemed me. No one can bring any charge against God's elect.

Satan is no match for the Truth. Remember Jesus in the wilderness.

We have this victory through making Jesus better than life, vs. 11.

What would happen if God let Satan do to us what He let Satan do to Job? What would happen if Satan stripped away everything from us except our testimony, our

belief in Jesus? What would happen if we lost everything, all our possessions, all our family, all our security and support, all our bank accounts and insurance, everything?

Would it be said of us that he loved not his own life even unto death? Would we say, “the Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord”?

Would we curse God and die, or would we say as Job did, “shall we receive good from God and not evil?”

Hebrews 10:34-36 ... you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. 35 Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

And though this world with devils filled
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.

The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure
For, lo, his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

Prayers of spiritual warfare:

“Holy Father, you are my Refuge and my Rock. You are in control of everything that happens in my life. I am your servant, called by your name. Thank you for giving me the helmet of salvation – my identity in your Son is secure. Nothing can separate me from your love. Thank you for forgiving and cleansing my guilt and sin. I put on your breastplate of righteousness. Holy Spirit search out and bring into the light any schemes of darkness directed at me. I take up the shield of faith to stand against the works of the evil one. In Jesus’ name, I stand on the truth of the Word of God: ‘The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work’ (I John 3:8)” (Tom White, *A Believers Guide to Spiritual Warfare*, 116).

"Satan, I rebuke you in the authority of Jesus Christ. I declare your works in my life destroyed. Jesus triumphed over you in the wilderness, on the cross, and in the grave. His resurrection has sealed your fate. I triumph over you now in the strength of his name. I resist and rebuke your efforts to oppress, afflict, or deceive me. I remove from you the right to rob me of the joy and fruit of my salvation. Through the power of the blood of Calvary, I command all powers of darkness assigned to me, sent to me, or surrounding me now, to leave. Go where Jesus Christ orders you to go, never to return" (Tom White, *A Believers Guide to Spiritual Warfare*, 116).