

Book of Revelation
Lesson 15 - Revelation 12:1-17

1. Chapter 12

1.1. Chapter 11 concludes the first major division of Revelation. The second section, chapters 12-22, takes the narrative forward but with a different point of emphasis.

1.1.1. In chapters 1-11, the text focuses upon the work of Christ as the head and Savior of His church. The first main division (**chapters 1-11**) pictures the outward struggle between the church and the world.

1.1.2. The concluding section focuses upon the warfare in which Christ and His church are to be engaged. The second part of the book reveals the deeper background. It can now be seen that the conflict between the church and the world is but the outward demonstration of the war between the Christ and Satan.

1.1.2.1. The main characters which arise in opposition to Christ and his church are introduced in chapters 12-14. They are the dragon, the beast out of the sea, the beast out of the earth, Babylon and the men that have the mark of the beast.

1.1.2.2. The visions that follow show us what happened to each of these anti-Christian forces, to those having the mark of the beast (chapters 15-16); to the harlot Babylon and to the two beasts (chapters 17-19); and to the dragon, (chapters 20-22).

1.1.3. The whole history of the church is in view.

1.2. **Chapters 12-22** form the second section of the book.

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1.3. **Chap 12 - 14** introduces the enemies of God and Christ.

1.3.1. We begin to deal with the section of Revelation where we have the warfare underway between the forces of God and Satan -- or good and evil; Satan as he moves out to accomplish his sinful purposes.

2. **Rev. 12:1-2**

2.1. **Rev. 12:1-2 - And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; And she being with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered.**

2.1.1. John introduces to us a wonder in heaven.

2.1.1.1. "A great sign..." - a special revelation in symbolism

2.1.2. In the vision a woman is with child. She is pictured in terms of having the array of God about her, the elements of light: sun, moon and stars. Immediately here we should see that we have something presented from

Gods and given in terms of glory, might and power, rather than something from Satan and from evil.

2.1.3. The identity of the woman and the child has been the object of much speculation

2.1.3.1. The catholic church believes the woman is the virgin Mary.

2.1.3.2. Our position is the woman is the church or simply the "people of God," seen first as the nation of Israel, and then on into the Christian age as the obedient followers of the Christ.

2.1.3.2.1. It is important to note the fact that the church did not give birth to the Christ; rather, Christ gave occasion whereby the church would come into existence (**Acts 20:28**).

2.1.3.2.1.1. Two details:

2.1.3.2.1.1.1. Her crown is a stephanos, a crown of victory.

2.1.3.2.1.1.2. The number 12 is used...

2.1.3.2.1.1.2.1. How HAS "12" been used?

2.1.3.2.1.1.2.1.1. 12 tribes of Israel

2.1.3.2.1.1.2.1.2. 12 apostles

2.1.3.2.1.1.3. "12" is symbolic of Organized Religion

2.1.3.2.2. The woman represents the righteous of both the Old and New Covenant. Before the child is born, she represents the righteous of the Old Covenant. After the child goes to heaven, she represents the church.

2.1.3.2.3. The woman represents the people of God, in the plan of God wherein God would come into the world -- Christ was to come unto his own (**John 1:11**) -- and that this very fact, Christ entering the world with the redemptive plan, was sufficient motivation for Satan to stand in opposition to him.

2.1.3.2.3.1. **1 John 3:8**

2.1.3.2.3.2. **John 1:1-11 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but [came] that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light, [even the light] which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.**

3. **Rev. 12:3 - And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems.**

- 3.1. John sees another sign in heaven; it is a great red dragon with seven heads, and ten horns and seven crowns.
 - 3.1.1. Verse nine reveals that this is Satan, the devil.
- 3.2. Many think the red indicates blood or murder since the red horse represented slaughter in the second seal.
- 3.3. The seven heads indicate great intelligence.
- 3.4. Horns represent strength in the Bible, so ten horns represent great strength.
- 3.5. The crowns are diadems, which are crowns of royalty. This represents his power over many in the world.
- 3.6. The design of the dragon is to block the work Christ would purpose to do in this world.
- 3.7. He has the strength, force, influence and the avenues open to use in this world. His opposition, in this scene, is to the man-child ready to be delivered. He stands at the ready.
4. **Rev. 12:4 - And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child.**
 - 4.1. Satan has great power but it is limited.
 - 4.2. He has always desired to destroy the relationship between God and His people.
 - 4.3. God's plan cannot be thwarted by Satan, and those things decreed before the foundation of the world for man's benefit (**Eph. 1:4**) will come to pass. God will accomplish his purposes and in the fullness of time, his will does its work.
5. **Rev. 12:5 - And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne.**
 - 5.1. Within one verse we move from Christ's birth to His ascension to heaven.
 - 5.1.1. **Who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron** is from **Psalms 2:9**, which is a messianic prophecy and identifies the child as Jesus Christ.
 - 5.2. His death is implied here and then mentioned in verse 11.
 - 5.3. **How does the church give birth to Christ?**
 - 5.3.1. **Through the proclaiming of the gospel!**
6. **Rev. 12:6 - And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**
 - 6.1. The woman represents the church. She flees into the wilderness where there is a place prepared by God. God will protect her for 1,260 days.
 - 6.1.1. The children of Israel were in the wilderness for forty years. God took care of them. Elijah fled to the wilderness and God took care of him. The idea is that God will take care of the church. The church will not be destroyed as Jesus promised in **Matthew 16:18**. The 1,260 days is the same as the forty-two months and the time, times and half a time of Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:14.
 - 6.1.1.1. The symbol of 42 months represents that as long as there is persecution of God's people, he will protect those who are sealed (in a spiritual manner).
 - 6.1.1.2. This promise of God's protection is for the entire Christian Age. The church will not be destroyed; however, some individual Christians might die as indicated under the seven seals.

- 6.2. As was mentioned in **chapter 11**, the persecution of God's people will be limited but His promise to His people is that He will be with them come what may.
- 6.3. Having introduced the idea of the conflict to come, John then proceeds to give us the details of this battle which will be underway until the end of time.
- 6.3.1. At the end of time, Satan himself will be cast into the lake of fire (**Rev. 20:10**), but until that final resolving of all things, he will be active in opposing all of God and all of good.
- 6.3.2. John lets the stage be set by noting that the very idea of the good to be accomplished by the Christ is opposed by Satan, and he presents to us a background to Satan's work on this earth.
7. **Rev. 12:7 - And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels [going forth] to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels;**
- 7.1. The war is described continues the vision which John has been allowed to see.
- 7.2. In the vision, John saw war in heaven. This must not be interpreted that Satan literally invaded heaven and there was a battle for the control of heaven. This is the symbol.
- 7.2.1. Michael is called the archangel in **Jude 9**. Archangel means chief angel. He is mentioned by name three times in Daniel (**Daniel 12:10, 13, 21**).
- 7.3. The meaning is that there is not only a war going on between Satan and the church, but there is a war going on between Christ and Satan, between good and evil. The church is in the middle of the battle.
- 7.4. To accept this passage in literal manner means one must switch from a symbolic framework in **verses 1-6** to a literal framework in **7-9** and then back again in the remaining passages of **chapter 12**.
8. **Rev. 12:8-9**
- 8.1. **Rev. 12:8 - And they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.**
- 8.2. **Rev. 12:9 - And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.**
- 8.2.1. John gives us the picture of Satan and his angels in opposition to the work of God. God's forces stand steadfast, and Satan, unable to succeed, is cast out. Therefore, he must labor elsewhere.
- 8.2.2. The dragon (Satan) and his forces were cast down. This is talking about the climax that occurred in the war between God and Satan **when Jesus arose from the dead and ascended into heaven**.
- 8.2.3. He is called that old serpent which is a reference to Genesis 3:1. He is called the devil. The term literally means the slanderer.
- 8.2.4. He is called Satan. Satan means the "adversary." He accuses men before God in heaven as in Job 1:6-11 and Zechariah 3:1-10. He seeks to get people to sin, and then runs and accuses them to God is the idea. He is also called the deceiver of the whole world. He deceives by lying as he is the father of liars (John 8:44). He deceived Eve by his cunning (II Corinthians 11:3).

- 8.2.5. He is also spoken of as the "prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). He is also pictured as a roaring lion seeking to devour people (1 Peter 5:8). He is a powerful and formidable enemy.
- 8.2.6. Unable to accomplish his work in heaven, he is seen as coming to work on earth. An advance picture of his influence is seen in the declaration that he **"deceiveth the whole world."**
- 8.2.7. He has not been able to keep the Son of God from entering the Divine plan, and he is unable to block God's work in this heavenly scene; he turns his attention to this earth.
- 8.3. The Bible does give us hints of Satan's origins and historical nature, but we really aren't given that information in full by God...
- 8.3.1. **Eph. 6:11-12**
- 8.3.2. **2 Cor. 11:14**
- 8.3.3. **John 8:44**
- 8.3.4. **1 John 3:8**
- 8.3.5. And the Bible does mention fallen angels in **2 Peter 2:4** and **Jude 6**
- 8.4. **Satan's war against God has been revealed to us as far back as the Garden of Eden.**
9. **Rev. 12:10 - And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night.**
- 9.1. Satan's purposes are opposed by the work of the Christ.
- 9.2. Cast down to the earth to work among men, he is called "the accuser of the brethren."
- 9.3. Satan is met with the shout heralding the things of the Savior: salvation, strength, the kingdom of God, the power of Christ.
- 9.4. More than just the godly might and force involved in these things, there is the picture that the saints of God are able to overcome Satan. Indeed, **"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).**
10. **Rev. 12:11 - And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.**
- 10.1. The brethren (Christians) also overcame Satan, but not by themselves.
- 10.1.1. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 1:5).
- 10.1.2. The second reason they overcame Satan was because of the word of their testimony, which they believed and preached to others.
- 10.1.3. The third reason they overcame Satan was because they trusted in Jesus and were not afraid to die for their faith.
- 10.2. The sacrificial nature of these saints is seen in their willingness to die -- **"they loved not their lives unto the death."**
- 10.3. This call is the same for us today.
11. **Rev. 12:12 - Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.**
- 11.1. Rejoicing is mingled with warning. The dual cry is: "Rejoice ye heavens!" and "Woe to the inhabitants of earth!" Why the warning?

- 11.1.1. The answer given is that Satan is now come down to earth, full of wrath and that wrath all the more intense because he knows his is but a short work-span on earth.
- 11.1.2. We know of that awareness on his part in that the devils once asked the Lord, as he was about to cast them out of a man, "**Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?**" (**Matt. 8:29**).
- 11.1.3. Satan, of all men and beings, must make good use of his time and opportunities!
- 12. **Rev. 12:13 - And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man [child].**
 - 12.1. Satan turns his attention to the people of God.
 - 12.2. When Satan saw he was defeated in trying to kill Jesus, he turned to persecuting the church, which is spiritual Israel represented by the woman.
 - 12.3. He cannot overcome Christ directly, of course. He must work against the people of God.
- 13. **Rev. 12:14 - And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.**
 - 13.1. Satan is no match for God. He turns his wrath upon the woman (God's children), but God gives the woman two wings of the great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness and be taken care of.
 - 13.2. The eagle "wings" remind one of **Exodus 19:4** which says, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Also see **Deuteronomy 32:11** and **Isaiah 40:31**).
 - 13.3. God will always protect His people from spiritual defeat **but especially during** the limited time of persecution where Satan will be allowed to attack God's people.
- 14. **Rev. 12:15-17**
 - 14.1. **Rev. 12:15 - And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream.**
 - 14.2. **Rev. 12:16 - And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth.**
 - 14.3. **Rev. 12:17 - And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:**
 - 14.3.1. Now exceedingly wrathful, Satan turns to direct his attacks against the saints -- those who keep the commandments of their God, and who have the testimony of Jesus Christ.
 - 14.3.2. At the end of it all, and in that which is the theme of the book, there are the eternal blessings to those who overcome.
- 15. The conflict between the forces of God and the forces of Satan continues on today, and will continue on throughout the entire Christian age.
 - 15.1. So many do not realize the great spiritual war that is being waged every day all around them.