

Revelation 12:7–12

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[0 : 00] of God's Word. Revelation chapter 12 verses 7 through 12. Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon.

And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.

He was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come.

For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they love not their lives even unto death.

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.

[1 : 04] This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Good afternoon to you.

You probably noticed by now that we did not take an offering yet. That will happen when we get to the response time after our communion at the end of the service.

Because we know that you, many of you, or some of you at least, have come prepared to give. We want to give you the opportunity to do that. So we will get to that later. Join me in prayer, would you please?

Well, we do give thanks to you on this afternoon. Praise you for the activities of this day. Praise you for this season that we find ourselves in. I pray for our time before you even today as the word of God is spoken and heard and pondered and ultimately acted upon.

Pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. I have several books that are, you might say, seasonal in that they come off the bookshelves at a particular time.

[2 : 30] One of those books, and I referred to it the other night, *The Jesus I Never Knew* by Phil Yancey. And I would like to read a portion of that book that refers to this particular chapter that we're in, even at the beginning of my message.

Listen. Yancey writes, There's one more view of Christmas I have never seen on a Christmas card. Probably because no artist, not even William Blake, could do it justice.

Revelation 12 pulls back the curtain to give us a glimpse of Christmas as if it must have looked somewhere far beyond Andromeda.

Christmas from the angel's viewpoint. The count differs radically from the birth stories in the Gospels. Revelation does not mention shepherds and an infanticidal king.

Rather, it pictures a dragon leading a ferocious struggle in heaven. A woman clothed with the sun and wearing a crown of 12 stars cries out in pain as she is about to give birth.

[3 : 44] Suddenly, the enormous red dragon enters the picture, his tail sweeping a third of the stars out of the sky and flinging them to the earth. He crouches hungrily before the woman, anxious to devour her child the moment it is born.

At the last second, the infant is snatched away to safety. The woman flees into the desert and an all-out cosmic war begins.

Revelation. Christmas. Christmas. And actually, what you have there is Christmas chaos. We know something about Christmas chaos, don't we?

It sort of has a way of landing, descending, gets a little crazy sometimes. Really nothing that we have experienced or will experience compares with what we see in our text on this afternoon.

The beauty of Revelation 12 with all its symbols is that it allows the church of the ages an opportunity to get a view from the top.

[4 : 56] We get a very wide-angled view from Revelation 12. So the redemptive work of Christ on earth is the means of the defeat of the dragon in heaven and the triumph of the saints on earth in spite of opposition.

That is a very, very key point. Again, as we look at the redemptive work of Christ, look at Revelation 12 and verse 5. That in a very reduced kind of perspective, it speaks about the seed of the woman, Christ, and his work.

Look there. She gave birth to a male child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was called up to God and to his throne in a very miniature kind of way.

You see the work of Christ. He comes and he's crucified and he's buried and resurrected and called up to God as an indication of the approval of his work.

The child of the woman has been called up to the throne. The woman, the community of the faithful from which Christ came, has fled to the wilderness and found protection from God there for a designated period of time.

[6 : 26] We heard about that on last week. But notice again, as we get to verse 7, the shift to the heavenlies and what we are unable to behold there is the impact of the unseen realm of the redemptive work of the woman's child that's called up to heaven.

And again, you'll get to see that the impact of Christ's redemptive work in ways that we cannot see with the naked eye. Just what it means or what it has meant in that particular realm.

It's a view from the top. It's clear that when we enter into Revelation chapter 12, verses 7 through 12, we enter into a war zone.

And I hope you to see that. But here, the swords come out. They are unsheathed. And the language, the very language of war is there.

Look there with me in the text. We can see it. See it. In verse 7. Now, war arose in heaven. Look at, as we read further.

[7 : 42] Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back. Oh, I love verse 8.

But he, that is the dragon, was defeated. Oh, that's such a great word there. I mean, that's an amen.

That's a point for an amen. The dragon was defeated. Oh, okay. But notice also, look at verse 9. Three times the word thrown down is there.

And the great dragon was what? Thrown down. That ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan and the deceiver of the whole Lord. Look at it again. He was thrown down to the earth.

And his angels again were thrown down with him. It's the language of war. But look at verse 11.

[8 : 43] Also, you see there. And they have, there's another war word, conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of the testimony.

For they love not their lives unto what? Death. Another war word. It probably goes down that one of the all-time favorite toys at Christmas time have been plastic soldiers of some kind.

If I were to have by a show of hands who has received plastic soldiers, we probably would get quite a few who receive that wonderful and marvelous gift.

Huh? When our grandson comes over on the weekend, he takes his bath and he's probably in the bathroom for about an hour, but he's not bathing all that time.

He has assembled plastic men of various sorts and they, in the bathtub, they are warring with one another there. Huh?

[9 : 51] Huh? Picture two opposing sides warring and that is what you see in the heavenlies.

Of course, today the same dynamic is a part of video games and computers. Huh? Warring one with another. Those kinds of dynamics are there. In the big picture of things, and I want to point out what we see here.

Here we see two war zones, two battlefronts, where war is waged, battles are fought, verse 7, in heaven.

But also the battles are fought in verses 12 and 13. There are battles that you see on earth. You see verse 7? Now war arose in heaven.

But then, look at verse 12. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. But look here. Woe to the earth. Woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has what?

[10:51] Come down in great wrath because he knows this time is short. And when the devil saw that he had been thrown down to the earth. Two battlefields.

Two war zones. But also there are two opponents. There are two opponents who face off with each other.

Michael and his angels on the one hand. You see that in verse 7. And the dragon and his angels on the other. The biblical profile that we have of Michael the archangel is that he is the protector and the defender of the people of God.

The prince, the guardian. And Daniel, he is one who contends in the unseen realms. You'll see that in Daniel chapter 10, verse 13 and 21.

As a matter of fact, let's turn over there. I wasn't going to get it. But I feel that we need to see him otherwise in that role. And we could see him in a similar role in Revelation.

[11:54] You'll find that on page 748. In the Pew Bible, Daniel chapter 10. Look at verse 13. Verse 13.

The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days. But Michael, one of the chief princes. What did he do? He came to help me. For I was left there with the kings of Persia.

And again, he's talking about the unseen heavenly realms. Look at verse 21. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth. There is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

And again, if you look further behind there, you will see again, these are battles that are going on in the unseen realms. Two opponents. Here these opponents are representing two kingdoms.

The power of light and the power of darkness. Here they are. They are facing off against one another. Two war zones. Two opponents.

[13:03] But then you see two different outcomes or realize there is the defeat of the dragon and his forces. And their expulsion from heaven, the heavenlies.

And then there is the victory of Michael and his followers. Two different outcomes. Satan expelled. The dragon expelled. And we see also the victory for Michael and his followers. Let me talk about the first of those. The defeat of the dragon.

The redemptive work of Christ means that the dragon is defeated or Satan is defeated.

And John is helping his readers to see, hey, how did we get to this particular point? And this, you might say, is an explanation of that.

[14:06] Because Satan was wreaking havoc in the earthly realm. And he's helping them to see how they got to that particular part in history. But as I mentioned, verse 8 has a marvelous ring to it.

It's a sweet ring. But he was defeated. That's the dragon. It's not that the dragon was not strong.

The picture that we see of him here was one with seven heads and seven crowns. And it's an image of strength and power and authority.

It wasn't that he was not strong because he is. He's just not strong enough to win. The redemptive work of the Lamb of God is powerful enough, brothers and sisters, to defeat the strongest foe.

And Michael and his forces represented a stronger kingdom. And that is what the Lord wanted John and his readers and us to see. The enemy is indeed strong.

[15:17] But our champion and our Lord and through his marvelous and wonderful work is stronger. The words of verse 8, they speak of the legacy of the dragon.

The legacy of the dragon is ultimately a legacy of defeat. And notice with me there, notice the different aliases of the dragon. So just so there's no confusion about his identity, verse 9 helps us see that the dragon is the old serpent encountered by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

And he's otherwise known as the devil or the slanderer or the false accuser. And that's a key word. And Satan accuser. The final designation is one of him as the deceiver of the world.

Jesus describes him in John chapter 8 as a liar and the father of lies. He's a deceiver. And one of the things that you will see on next week, there's this water that's going out of his mouth.

And that probably speaks of a false doctrine, false teaching that Satan is majors in. The designation of the dragon as the serpent calls to mind.

[16:31] The prophecy of Genesis chapter 3 verses 14 and 15 where the defeat of the serpent is predicted. The Lord said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above the livestock and above all beasts of the field.

And on your belly you will go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity, hostility between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

And he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. Again, John brings into the picture this age old battle.

And just for no mistake about it, the dragon of Revelation chapter 12 is the serpent or behind the serpent in Genesis chapter 3. Satan and his company are defeated and expelled from heaven.

Now there are some who believe that this is, you know, somewhere before the beginning of time where Satan swept away a third of the angels. That doesn't seem to be what is in view here.

[17 : 38] With the expulsion of the dragon from the heavenly realms. And here's the big deal. The prosecuting attorney of the people of God is booted, has been booted.

From the heavenly floor. You might say his privileges have been restricted, curtailed. And Satan's role even today is one of accusation and slander against the people of God.

Turn with me to Zechariah chapter 3, page 294 in your pre-bible. Page 794. Zechariah 3 verse 1.

And we see a similar Satan in an accusatory role in the life of Joshua the high priest. And we see how this situation is dealt with.

And in a sense it parallels what we see in Revelation. And we'll read verses 1 through 5. Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord.

[18 : 43] And notice Satan standing at his right hand to do what? To accuse him. And the Lord said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you, O Satan.

The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is not this a brand plucked from the fire? Now Joshua was standing before the angel and noticed what he was clothed with.

Clothed with filthy garments. That was sort of a right for accusation. And he said to him, and to him he said, behold, I have noticed this. Taken away iniquity from you and I will clothe you with pure vestments.

And I said, let them put on a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord was standing by.

Here's the deal. The right or the reason for accusation was taken away. His sin was cleansed. No longer any reason to level charges against him because the sins had been dealt away.

[19 : 53] And just as Joshua was vindicated because of his cleansing. So through the blood of Christ, our sins had been cleansed and accusation against us now fails.

Huh? Satan cast doubt. Well, this past week, U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald filed charges against our governor.

That is what prosecuting attorneys do. And such has been the role of Satan. The prosecuting attorney of God's people has been cast out of the heavenlies.

And our defense attorney, Jesus, now appears in the presence of God on our behalf. My little children, I write unto you that you sin not.

But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

[21 : 01] Jesus now appears in the presence of God on our behalf. Listen to the way Paul expresses it in Romans chapter 8, verses 33 and 34. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. God is the one who declares righteous. God is the one who acquits. Huh? Who is to condemn?

Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that who was raised. And hear it, hear it. Who is at the right hand of God who also intercedes for us.

For us. Prosecuting attorney. Gone. Defense attorney. There. In the presence of God. We see it. We hear it in Hebrews.

We hear Peter speaking about that. Where is Jesus? It's the location question. Where is he today? He is in the very presence of God. At the right hand. Who also intercedes on our behalf.

[22 : 03] Need a good attorney? You already got one. If you've got Jesus. Huh? The legal grounds for accusation are thrown out.

Satan continues to sell wolf tickets, doesn't he? Huh? Satan has been defeated from the heavenly spirit. He's been disbarred. His old schemes have no power.

The baby who came into the world to save accomplished his mission. Again. Verse 5. Huh? Crisis ascended victoriously. Satan's charges are no good.

They are bogus. Oh, that that might be the case for our governor. Huh? Two war zones. Heaven and earth.

Two opponents. Michael and the dragon representing kingdoms of light and darkness respectively. Two outcomes. Two outcomes. Outcome number one.

[23 : 04] The defeat of the dragon. He is cast out of the heavens. Huh? And then outcome number two. The triumph of the saints.

Huh? The triumph of the saints. That's what we see. It is in the context of another of heaven's songs that we hear the very triumph of the saints.

That song actually begins in verse 10. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, now. The salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ.

They have come. For here it is. The accuser of our brothers has been thrown down. Who accuses them day and night before our God.

And notice verse 11. They have conquered him. How? By the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony. For they love not their lives unto death.

[24 : 06] And therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. But check it out. Woe to you. But woe to you, O earth and sea. For what? The devil has come down to you in great wrath.

Because he knows that his time is short. Huh? This song celebrates the defeat of Satan. Huh? Isn't that a reason to sing?

The defeat of Satan is because of the inauguration of God's kingdom through the redemptive work of his son. And this song here identifies the key to the defeat of Satan, the victory of the saints.

It's one. One thing. Huh? Two war zones, two opponents, two outcomes. There's one ultimate source of victory. And the basis of defeat of Satan and his being cast out of heaven and the conquest of the saints is the same.

What is it? It's the redemptive work of Christ. The blood of Christ. Huh? Also seen in verse 5. Seen in verse 11. But also seen in verse 5.

[25 : 10] Notice the two things that are mentioned. The saving redemptive death of Christ and the word of their testimony.

For John's audience, both were essential. They needed to embrace both and so do we. Christ's blood is the ultimate basis for overcoming. But also the means of overcoming the devil was their witness on earth.

Through such ground. Such they gained ground for the kingdom of God on earth. It is their light bearing witness in the world. That validates and improves the victory of Christ on their behalf.

Notice you see verse 12. The worship in heaven. Worship why? Because the absence of the accuser was the cause for rejoicing. But woe on earth. And this explains the level of satanic activity on earth.

His efforts are now earth focused. And having had his heavenly sphere activity suspended. The focus is on the earth. Martin Luther expresses it well.

[26 : 18] And one of the church's favorites. A mighty fortress is our God. A boar never failing. For still our ancient foe.

The seek to work his woe. His craft and power are great. And armed with cruel hate on earth. Is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide? Our striving would be losing. We're not the right man. On our side. The man of God's own choosing.

Don't ask who that might be. Christ Jesus. It's he. Lord Sabaoth. Lord of hosts. Is his name. From age to age the same.

And he must win. The battle. Huh? So Satan's activity on earth. Is explained.

[27 : 16] Because he has been cast down. And that wrath has been experienced by the saints of the ages. He pursues and continues to pursue the seed of the woman.

Huh? Oh chaos in the garden. Chaos through the ages. Chaos around the victory of the cross. Chaos and chaos today.

As Satan continues to work his wows in the earth realm. Seeking. You know what Peter speaks about it. He walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

That's his activity. That's his work. He shows up. The thief comes but to steal, to kill and destroy.

That's his platform. But Jesus said I'm come that you might have life.

And that you might have it more abundantly. He's at work in the earth today. Satan's activity on earth is explained.

[28 : 21] Huh? And that wrath has been experienced. By the saints. Huh? He pursues. The seed. Of a woman. In Revelation 12.

John uses the language of Genesis 3. The serpent. The woman. The woman's offspring. Make no mistake. The dragon is the same as the ancient serpent of old.

And the chaos of that encounter has continued through the ages. Oh but brothers and sisters.

There is triumph in the midst of challenge on earth.

We overcome. Through the redemptive work of Christ. And through being rooted in our witness in this world.

Our testimony of him. And you see. That's what the writer of Revelation. Who pictures the churches as light bearing entities.

[29 : 19] And pictures them and exhorts them as far as overcoming. Let me show you here. Turn with me to Revelation chapter 2. Look at verse 11. Look at verse 17.

The whole idea. The triumph. In the heavens. But there are trials on earth. Even today. And though Satan booted from the heavenlies.

Active on earth. And sometimes even in the midst of those trials. It may even mean severe trial for the saints. Even to the point of death.

But look at Revelation chapter 2. Verse 11. Well let's back up to verse 10. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold the devil.

There he is. It's about to throw some of you into prison. That you may be tested. And for 10 days.

You will have tribulation. Be fruitful unto death. And I will give you what?

[30 : 15] The crown of life. And listen. Look at verse 11. He who has an ear. Let him hear what the spirit says to the church. To the one who conquers. Overcomes. Those will not be hurt.

By the second death. Now the first death may hurt you. But the second death. Will not. Look. Look at verse 17. Same chapter. He who has an ear.

Let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers. I will give you some of the hidden manna. And I will give him a white stone.

Some believe a stone of acquittal. And a new name written on the stone. Which no one knows except the one who receives it. To the one who conquers. He will give. And notice what the spirit of God.

At work. In the world. On the basis. Of the redemptive work. The ascension of Christ. Into heavens. Christ exalted. The descent of the Holy Spirit.

[31 : 11] We are not left without what we need. Even as we witness for Christ. In this world. Look at chapter 3. And verse 5. The one who conquers.

Will be clothed thus. In white garments. And I will never blot out his name. Out of the book of life. I will confess his name. Before my father. And before his angels. He who has an ear.

Let him hear. What the spirit. Says to. The churches. There's triumph. There's the triumph of the saints. In the heavens. Because of the redemptive work.

Of Jesus. Listen to what Colossians says. About the effect. The far-reaching effect. Of Jesus' death. Colossians 2. Verses 13 through 15.

And you who were dead. In your trespasses. And in the uncircumcision of your flesh. God made alive together with him. Having forgiven us. All our trespasses. By canceling the record of debt.

[32 : 09] That stood against us. With its legal demands. And listen to this. Thus he set aside.

Nailing it to the cross. He disarmed. The rulers. And authorities. And put them to an open shame.

By triumphing. Oh. Triumphing over them. In him. In Christ's redemptive work. Triumph. In the heavenlies.

Trials. On earth. War. War. But even in the war zone on earth. The people of God. And here's the deal.

Conquer. You see that? Back in Revelation 12. And 11. They have conquered him. And again. I know that's primarily speaking to him.

But I believe there is a parallel. In the earthly realm. Major theme in Revelation. As we as talked about. That conquering. Through the same means. The work of Christ. Christ.

[33 : 06] And the word of their testimony. That is their light. Bearing witness. It is through the witness of. The church. That God's kingdom. Moves forward. Even. In the midst.

Of the war zone. In this world. It's one of the messages. That John was trying to get across. That this world. In this world. And Jesus said it himself. You're going to have tribulation.

In Revelation. The saints there. Were facing that. And some of them. Antipas. Revelation chapter 2. My faithful martyr. These things may sound. Strange to us.

In the midst of the relative comfort. Of this world. But living for Christ. Witnessing for him. Does in fact. Have a price tag. And Jesus himself said. If any man will come after me.

Let him. Take up his cross. And follow me. Daily. Prepare to die. Prepare. To die. Huh? Who shall separate us from.

[34 : 04] The love of Christ. Shall tribulation. Or distress. Or persecution. Or famine. Or nakedness. Or peril. Or sword. As it is written.

For your sake. We're being killed. All the day long. We are being regarded as sheep. To be slaughtered. No. In. All. These things.

We're not. Simply. Overcomers. We are more than conquerors. Through him. Who loved us. For I am sure. That neither death. Or life. Nor angels.

Or rulers. Nor things present. Or things to come. Nor powers. Nor height. Or depth. Nor any other thing. Anything else. In all creation. Will be able. To separate us. From the love of God.

In Christ Jesus. So in the midst. Of the trials. Down here. You and I. Need to realize. That there is triumph. In heaven. Because Satan. Has been cast out. The accuser of the brethren.

[34 : 59] The prosecuting attorney. Has been disbarred from heaven. And Jesus. Our. Faithful. High priest. Interceding for us. In the very presence of God. But that does not stop trials.

On earth. They continue to come. But even in the midst of them. You and I. Are more than conquerors. Through him. Who loved us. What am I saying. This afternoon.

Christ's. Redemptive work. Is the grounds. For the defeat. Of Satan. In heaven. And the means of triumph. For the saints. On earth.

Do you believe that? Know that. I believe that's what this passage teaches. And now we come to the table.

This afternoon. Thegins.