

The Seed & The Serpent

Text: Revelation 12.1–17

Theme: God protects His people from Satan's schemes through His Deliverer, Jesus Christ.

Introduction — The Holy War

- allegory helping to explain how sinful man is redeemed by God
- city of Mansoul, created and built by Shaddai, but now besieged by Diabolus
- Mansoul & its citizens await much needed deliverance through Immanuel, Shaddai's son
- once Immanuel defeats Diabolus, Mansoul is still beset by spies and attacks from Diabolus
- delightful tale of Christians awaiting ultimate deliverance by Jesus Christ

But in the meantime, it is a battle: Ephesians 6.12

- *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

In Revelation 12 through 14, the curtain is drawn back

- we can see the unseen reality of that warfare
- it took place in heaven; and, it takes place right now, in this world, and in your life
- you may not always realize it; or, you may know it full well
- but there is a very real enemy who is engaged in a war for your soul
- his aim is to alienate you from Jesus
- he wants to claim you as his own
- oh, not because he cares about you; he does not in the least
- but he wants to use you in his futile attempts to defy God

And so, we must be prepared

- we have this great need to know the danger we face
- sometimes it appears that Satan may be winning...but know this
- he always loses, the victory against him is secured already, and his accusations against you fail
- God protects His people from Satan's schemes through His Deliverer, Jesus Christ

Before we go through each portion of this chapter, let make sure...

I. THE STAGE IS SET

- last week, said that 11.15–19 was the linchpin of Revelation: all turns on this point
- it is the center of the book, both in terms of chapters, but themes as well
- 11.1–14 gives depiction of church being protected by God
- she is the temple in which God dwells, so of course she'll be protected
- but also saw depiction of church's great witness thru church history
- then, in 11.15–19, seventh trumpet blows, and hear shout of praise as Jesus returns
- flowing from that centerpiece is ch. 12–14
- in ch 12, another depiction of church being protected by God
- all the while being protected, church bears witness to Jesus and the gospel
- and the center of everything is this: 11.15–19: Christ is King
- God will protect all who are His
- and section prior and following say same thing, just from different perspectives
- Satan wants to accuse all believers before God
- but Jesus has won the victory and we are now God's

1. The main players in this drama

- there are three primary characters here
- the woman, in v. 1; the dragon, v. 3; and, a male child, v. 5
- also look at v. 1 and v. 3: these are not literal; they are... signs!
- John is seeing signs that point to a great reality; keep that in mind

1) The woman

- v. 1: *woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth*
- quick comment: this is not about Mary, mother of Jesus, although it points to her briefly
- key here: sun, moon, and stars — where else in Scripture do we see such a sign given?
- Genesis 37.9–10, in Joseph’s dream
- *“Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”*
- father, Jacob, also known as Israel, responds:
- *“Shall I and your mother and your brothers in deed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?”*
- not simply about Joseph or just Jacob: but about the people of God, under God’s covenant
- people of God live in confinement, awaiting the arrival of her deliverer, the Messiah
- then consider Micah 5.3, 4:
- *“Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.”*
- so, this woman represents the people of God under the Old Covenant
- but she also represent the people of God in New Covenant as well
- here is the connection: number twelve: tribes of Israel, apostles of Christ
- saw this already in 24 elders back in ch. 4: 12 + 12 = 24 — whole people of God
- OT people await the Deliverer; NT sees the Messiah come
- see this in **vv. 5–6**
- this Deliverer comes, then ascends — caught up to God & to his throne
- John summarizes all of Christ’s life in simply His birth to His ascension
- John given to see importance of Christ’s coming & ascension in this battle being waged
- Satan, frustrated in his attempts to devour this child, persecutes the woman: people of God
- so, when John speaks of this woman in the wilderness, people of God suffer at dragon’s hands
- which brings us to the second character in this drama

2) The dragon

- this one is easy to figure out from the text
- v. 9: the great dragon, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver
- John leaves no doubt who this character is: our great enemy
- the sign of seven heads, ten horns & seven crowns means he is powerful & has universal reach
- later, his tail sweeps one-third of stars from heaven
- this describes Lucifer’s fall taking angels with him
- Isaiah 14.12 & Ezekiel 28.13–17 speak of this fall from heaven also
- it is not some literal apocalyptic monstrosity, but the devil himself
- the same serpent who tempted & deceived our forebears in the Garden
- he now persecutes us and Christ’s church
- v. 10 calls Satan the “accuser of the brothers”—this is what he does
- he seeks to rob us of joy and confidence and freedom from guilt
- we must be careful not pay too much attention or give too much credit to him
- but neither must we remain ignorant, as Apostle Paul warns us, in 2 Corinthians 2.11

- “[we should]...not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”

3) The male child

- in v. 5, we’re told the pregnant woman gives birth to a male child
- the people of God in the OT, Israel, were used to bring forth the Messiah
- we know this is so, for in Psalm 2, God says He will bring forth His Deliverer
- “*who will rule with a rod of iron*” just as we read in Rev 12.5
- the reason John sums up all Jesus did on earth in His ascension...why?
- so the people of God, His church, since that time will know they are ones in the wilderness
- Christ is no longer bodily present with us, but is preparing us for heaven, when He returns
- and this He will most certainly do, for we read in v. 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 have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.”*
- this male child brings salvation & strength to believers
- as He ascends, the dragon is cast down

Those are the main players in this divine drama; now let’s see...

II. THE DRAGON ENGAGED — 12.1–6

- so, we know this dragon is the devil, Satan himself
- note how he hovers around the woman, hoping to devour the child
- you can think Mary, if you wish, but you must go back further...all the way to Eve to see this
- after the serpent (Rev. 12.9) tempted Eve and she & Adam sinned, God spoke to them
- Genesis 3.15: *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*
- the outcome, even after first grand act of rebellion by man, is never in doubt
- the seed, the Promised One, the Deliverer will triumph over the serpent
- when Cain killed his brother, Abel, that was the serpent at work to end the seed of promise
- when Pharaoh told Hebrew women to drown male babies in Egypt, the devil was at work
- as Saul chased after David to kill him, that old dragon was hoping to end the line of the seed
- think of Haman plotting to kill all the Jews in the land of captivity: guess who? Satan
- and then, when Messiah is truly born of virgin Mary, Herod was used to kill all male children
- Satan is engaged in a battle for us, for the church of Jesus Christ
- but the gospel is always the answer: God’s promise of deliverance from sin thru Jesus Christ
- every time gospel preached, Jesus Christ’s great work held up, Satan hears his death sentence
- Satan engages with us, but God engages the devil with His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ
- one final comment, v. 6
- the woman in the wilderness...for how long? 1, 260 days
- we have seen how this is the sign, the shadow pointing to reality of time of God’s people
- began when this “male child” was caught up to God — His ascension
- and ends when Christ returns to put Satan away forever

Next, we see...

III. THE DRAGON EJECTED — 12.7–12A

- these verses are not describing something in the future
- nor are they a simple timeline of events
- no; they are a replay of Christ’s victory over Satan
- we love replays in sports: you see a touchdown scored in slow motion, from 5 different angles
- that’s a bit of what is happening here

1. The cross defeats the accuser

- vv. 7–8 tells of the war in heaven
- after Jesus died, Satan, no doubt, thought he had finally won a great victory over God
- Jesus rose from the dead & ascended to His throne and Satan is always the loser
- archangel Michael is given authority to fight against Satan & his minions and he wins
- Satan is cast out of courtroom in heaven
- you remember how Satan accused Job of loving God for only what he could profit
- well, this will no longer happen as he is cast out of that courtroom
- while Jesus was living, dying, being raised from the dead, this battle raged
- it is now over: Satan is defeated & it's why, end of v. 12: he knows his time is short

2. Salvation and no accuser

- v. 10 is tremendous news for each of us
- all that God willed regarding our salvation has come through Jesus Christ
- nothing left out, including defeat of the accuser
- Satan loves to accuse us, bringing up past sins that have been dealt with by God in Christ
- but when cast out of heaven's court, he can no longer stand there before God and do this
- the war of the worlds has been won
- devil is fighting for survival, but he is done, defeated and thrown down

Well, we can now see...

IV. THE DRAGON ENRAGED — 12.12B–16

- yes, Satan is a defeated enemy, thrown out of the presence of God forever
- even though he tries to accuse you of sins not covered by Christ at the cross, he fails at that
- you must remember this, for the devil is enraged now and seeks your harm
- he is no weakling, but like a wounded animal, perhaps lashing out, hurting until he is dead
- robbed of the child he sought to destroy, in his rage, he comes after the church

1. Wings of an eagle

- this is so reminiscent of the exodus from Egypt
- word “pursues” in v. 13 is used three times in Acts to describe the persecution of church
- this pursuit, in v. 13, is the same thing: Satan coming after Christ's church, to harm her
- but we are given the wings of an eagle
- remember when Israel left Egypt, we read this in **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.”
- then, when coming out of exile in Babylon, in **Isaiah 40.31**, God says the same thing
- *but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*
- because we have conquered by the blood of the Lamb (the true passover Lamb, by the way)...
- and our testimony is of Jesus' victory and salvation...
- we will be protected by God

2. Poured like water

- did not Pharaoh command the Hebrew midwives to drown male babies to end the seed?
- Satan wants to destroy life, especially God's people: Satan hates babies; don't forget that

3. Another exodus

- v. 16: the earth came to the aid
- God delivered His people from Pharaoh thru the Red Sea & destroyed Pharaoh's armies too
- He delivered His people from opposition when ground opened up against enemies of Moses
- a new exodus has come in Christ Jesus
- the exile and time in the wilderness of this life may seem long
- but Christ will return; God will protect His own; Satan is a defeated enemy

Finally, we must see...

V. THE DRAGON OVERCOME

- v. 11 and 17 help us to know our victory is in Jesus indeed

1. In Jesus

- in **v. 11** we read: *they conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony for they loved not their lives unto death*
- we are safe when we are in Jesus Christ for Christ's blood overcame Satan's attempts
- and the testimony you give to Jesus Christ holds you
- your allegiance belongs to Jesus Christ alone then
- given to any other thing, person, methodology or ideology will take you down with it
- you are safe in Christ

2. More than conquerors

- man in wheat field that caught on fire
- remembered words to save himself: start fire around you, burnt ground around you saves you
- v. 17: Satan, the dragon, comes hard after you and me and this church
- he is furious at his defeat
- the fire is coming, but we can find safety
- burn away the ground of the world, the flesh and the devil around us
- flee to the burnt ground of Calvary, where God has already burned against sin
- if we are in Christ, we are justified, sanctified, glorified already
- image of burnt ground around us is filled with commandments & testimony of Jesus
- we must be grounded in God's Word to stand against the devil
- and we must persevere, not loving life more than gospel; if so, we will die
- but do not fear what man can do, all they can do is kill you
- instead, fear the Lord and live

Conclusion – God protects His people from Satan's schemes thru His Deliverer, Jesus

- we may rest gloriously in the victory and love of Jesus Christ
- He has overcome
- this is the message of Revelation and of this chapter 12

Sing these words with confidence this word gives us:

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song;
 This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
 firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
 What heights of love, what depths of peace,
 When fears are stilled, when strivings cease;
 My Comforter, my All in All,
 here in the love of Christ I stand.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from His hand;
'Til He returns or calls me home,
here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

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