



## Part 16: Unseen Reality: Cosmic War

### Revelation 12

*We triumphed over Satan through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.*

#### HERE BE DRAGONS

Revelation is giving us a true picture of the ultimate dragon, Satan, and his war against God's people. Disciples of Jesus are opposed by a great spiritual power who seeks to keep us from true worship and obedience.

The New Testament repeatedly warns us of this sobering reality (John 10:10, Ephesians 6:10-20, 2 Corinthians 2:11, 1 Peter 5:8-9). Revelation describes the same spiritual realities and uses apocalyptic imagery while also assuring us that Satan is a defeated enemy through the crucifixion and resurrection of King Jesus.

Revelation 12 is the theological center of the book, and most commentators see Revelation 12:11 as the key verse in the entire book.

#### BASIC INTERPRETATION

- The key characters:
  - *"...a woman clothed with the sun..."* (12:1) = the covenant people of God, both before and after the birth of Jesus. She is particularly representing the human lineage of Jesus, including Mary.

Note: she is described in a way that is a clear allusion to the people of Israel in Joseph's dream (Genesis 37:9).

- *"... An enormous red dragon ..."* (12:3) = Satan (12:9). Jesus called Satan the "father of lies" (John 8:44) and the "prince of this world" (John 12:31, 16:11).

Note: Satan is described using clear imagery from Daniel 7:7-8.

- *“She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter” (12:5, Psalm 2).*

Note: here we are given the cosmic picture of the Christmas story where Satan tried to destroy Jesus through King Herod (Matthew 2:16f).

Note: This is an example of progressive parallelism or recapitulation in the book (the visions are not in chronological order).

- The decisive event (12:10): the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of King Jesus has dealt Satan a mortal blow, but the war rages on for now.

## SATAN’S SCHEMES

- Lies and False Gospels (12:9)

Ex. The myth of the secular gospel = we will progress to utopia without God (rid ourselves of the superstition of religion). The scheme of secular salvation ...

- “Eden” = we are born good, innocent, and happy (our inner child/true self)
- “Fall” = something happened to obstruct our happiness – trauma, tradition, externally-given identities, authority, binding commitments, etc. (happiness is now defined as pleasure)
- “Sin” = anything that challenges/hinders your “true identity/freedom”
- “Salvation” = rediscovering your inner child/true self and freedom
- “Holiness” = fleeing “sin” = anything that hinders your “true identity/freedom”
- “Discipleship” = creating an outer identity that expresses your inner self
- “Heaven” = happiness redefined as pleasure/feeling good about yourself

True Gospel (John 10:10) = We seek to know the Truth about Jesus and His Way, which is the way into true identity and freedom (John 8:32).

- Accusation and shame against God’s people (12:10b)

True Gospel = Jesus' crucifixion is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and He pays the penalty for our sin (Romans 3:21-26, 8:33-34; 1 John 1:9, 2:1-2, 4:10).

### **WORSHIP KING JESUS**

We are promised the grace and power of God as we journey through the desert on our way Home (Revelation 12:13-14, Isaiah 40:29-31).

*"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:29-31.*