Revelation 12 | The Dragon Has Been Defeated!

Intro = The Hobbit and Smaug
• = The Dragon has been defeated!
• This was much needed news for John, his audience—and all of us
  o Because at times it seems like things are only getting worse and that there is no end and no
    meaning to the evil and injustice in the world.

“John is taken behind the scenes of history to learn the fundamental reason for the intense antagonism that is
mounting against the church in the last days. To understand that the rising tide of persecution is simply the final
death struggle of an already defeated foe will encourage believers to hold fast until the ordeal is over.” –
Robert H. Mounce

We have to identify the key characters of the vision—The woman, the dragon and the child
• The woman is Israel, through whom Jesus (in terms of His human nature) entered into history (verses 1-2)
  o Genesis 37:9-10, NLT
• The great red dragon is Satan (verse 3) (cf. Rev. 12: 9)
  o Isaiah 26:21-27:1, NLT
  o 7 heads; 10 horns; 7 crowns
  o The dragon is poised before the woman who is about to give birth, to “devour the child” (v. 4)
• The male child is Jesus the Messiah (verse 5)
  o The phrase “rule the nations with a rod of iron” makes it clear
    • Psalm 2:7-9, NASB
    • The description of ruling with a rod of iron is not about governance (ruling the world with
great severity), but judgment (Cf. shepherd protects his flock from predators with his staff)
  o Verse 5 = a condensing of the Gospel (born, cross, res., ascension, ruling)

Before the child “rules with a rod of iron” (judges the nations), the dragon attempted to destroy the child
• It began with the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem (Cf. Matthew 2:16)
• Culminated in Jesus’ death upon the Cross
  o But, the dragon was thwarted
    • The child being “caught up into heaven” is a reference to the Ascension (Cf. The Res.)
    • It looked like the dragon had succeeded, but Christ rose from the dead and ascended
      into heaven!

What is being revealed here is the origin, nature and true essence of the battle between
good and evil
• God had created humanity and all things and it was good
  o Satan tempted humanity to sin and evil, we fell—and it was bad
• God called Israel and promised to save the world from sin and conquer evil through them (Messiah)
  o Satan was determined to destroy Israel
• Jesus came to conquer evil and save people from sin
  o Satan tried to destroy Him… and failed
• Jesus defeated Satan and saved us through His death on the Cross and Resurrection from the dead
  o Colossians 2:12-15, NLT
  o Hebrews 2:14-15, NLT

The next section (vv. 7-9) is a summation of that victory and of Satan’s subjugation to God
• Represented in this vision by warring of angels (representing good and God) and Satan and his fallen
  angels (demons)

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What is revealed now is why God’s people (Israel and the church) had been, were being (in context), are now, and will be in the future the object of persecution

- See verses 13 and 17
- = Israel and the Church

The key information of chapter 12 is that because Satan has been defeated in heavenly battle, he is now going to vent his upon God’s children on earth

- This expands our understanding of the nature of the tribulation period and the chaos that envelopes the world
  - We have seen clearly that what is going on is that God’s wrath is being poured out
  - But we also now see clearly that Satan’s wrath is also being unleashed
  - = The Tribulation Period is both (1) God’s wrath against evil and (2) evil’s wrath against God
    - And since Satan and evil can do nothing directly to God—the object of Satan’s fury is that which God loves most—His people (vv. 13 and 17)

- So what chapter 12 is doing is revealing to us the true source of persecution and warfare and opposition to God’s people
  - In order that we might clearly see it’s limited source, power, scope and duration
    - That we might persevere and overcome
    - Verse 12 = knowing that he has only a short time
    - Revelation 20:10, NASB

Even though there will be persecution, there is also God’s care and protection (in some way)

- Verses 6 and 14-16
  - 3.5 years of tribulation or general statement about Israel during times of persecution
- Salient point is the God loves and cares for her
  - Same during their ordeal in Egypt – Exodus 19:4, NASB
  - Because of His covenant love – Deuteronomy 32:9-11, NLT
- Satan’s wrath is like an overwhelming flood (vv. 15-16)
  - God intervenes (pictured by the help of the earth) – Cf. with Pharaoh; Exodus 15:9-13, NLT

Because Satan has been ultimately defeated through the cross of Christ, his time and work are limited

- Evil has limits!
  - 1 Corinthians 10:13, NASB
  - James 4:7-8, NASB
  - 1 Peter 5:8-11, NASB

Heaven breaks into praise!

- Verses 10-11

Because the dragon has been defeated—we are given hope and strength to persevere

- The victory though Jesus is already ours!

Romans 8:28-39, NASB

There are difficult times in your life now—there are dark days to come

- But, take heart—Jesus has won! The dragon is defeated! Christ is King!
- The King is coming soon!