

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
 - 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. Mounce¹

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**)
 - **Genesis 37:9-10, NLT**
- The **great red dragon** is Satan (**verse 3**) (cf. **Rev. 12: 9**)
 - **Isaiah 26:21-27:1, NLT**
 - **7 heads; 10 horns; 7 crowns**
 - 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**)
 - The phrase "**rule the nations with a rod of iron**" makes it clear
 - **Psalms 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)
 - **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
 - 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
 - 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)
 - Satan was determined to destroy Israel
- Jesus came to conquer evil and save people from sin
 - Satan tried to destroy Him... and failed
- Jesus defeated Satan and saved us through His death on the Cross and Resurrection from the dead
 - **Colossians 2:12-15, NLT**
 - **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)

¹ Robert H. Mounce, *What Are We Waiting For: A Commentary of Revelation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1992), 59.

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!