

## **Blessed Are Those: A Journey through Revelation – Part 14**

### **War in Heaven and on Earth - Rev 12:1-17**

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

#### **Intro:**

- This morning, we are turning to Revelation 12 (p. 1069). In this chapter, we will encounter a glorious pregnant woman, her ruling male child, and a ferocious dragon who wages war against this woman and her children.
- So far in the book of Revelation, we have seen and heard a lot—from images of the glorified Christ to the messages to His church, to the throne room of heaven, to the breaking of the seven seals and the sounding of the seven trumpets.
- Now, in chapter 12 and moving forward through the last 10 chapters of this book, there is an unveiling of the fuller story and bigger picture of God’s grand story and great plan and the spiritual realities that have, are, and will take place through the totality of time and eternity.
- From our chapter for today, I am having us focus on two main points. The first is that *God has given us signs that point to spiritual realities*. And the second is that *there is an ongoing furious spiritual war*.
- Knowing these signs will strengthen your belief in God, Christ, His word, eternity, the church, and the supernatural. Knowing there is an ongoing spiritual war will give you perspective and motivate, prepare, and equip you to fight and win. These are the “blessings” that come from this chapter (see Rev 1:3).
- I think it is most helpful for us to read the chapter in its entirety so we can see all the elements and the big picture. Then, we can come back and focus on the various parts of our two main points and how this chapter fits together.

#### **Rev 12:1-17 NIV**

**A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. 2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.**

**3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. 4 Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.**

**5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. 6 The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.**

**7 Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.**

**10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of**

**our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.**

**11 They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**

**12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”**

**13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach.**

**15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.**

**17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.**

**God has given us signs that point to spiritual realities**

- Signs tell us what something or someone is. For example, “Grand Canyon National Park,” “Costco,” or “Hello, my name is Dave.” Signs convey information about something else.
- In the Bible, signs work in the same way. The prophets gave signs pointing to their true identities and that their words were from God (Judg 6:17; 1 Sa 2:34; 10:9; 1 King 13:3; 19:29; Isa 38:7; Jer 44:29; Ezek 24:24; Zech 3:8). Jesus performed signs revealing His true identity (John 2:11; 4:54; 6:14; 7:31; 12:37; 20:30). True apostles gave signs of their identity (2 Cor 12:12).
- Now, in Revelation 12, we are given more signs. We are given a “great sign” (v. 1) and then “another sign” (v 3). So, we have to ask what these signs are and what they communicate, reveal, and point to.
- *The “great sign” is the woman, her child, and her offspring.*

**Rev 12:1-2 NIV**

**A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. 2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.**

- I believe that this “woman” is a symbol of Israel, God’s covenant people, for a number of reasons. First, Scripture refers to Israel as a woman, a bride, and a mother (Isa 7:14; 9:4; 54:1-8; 62:5; 66:7-10; Mic 4:9-10; 5:3).
- Second, the sun, moon, and twelve stars were the dream Joseph had that represented Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel), Rebecca, and their twelve sons, who became the tribes and nation of Israel (Gen 37:9).

- Third, this “woman” gives birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” Her child was snatched up to God and to his throne (Rev 12:5). This “male child” who will rule all the nations is Jesus. Abraham was promised that the Messiah would come from his physical descendants (Gen 12:1-7; Gal 3:16-18). This was prophesied to happen (Gen 49:10; Num 24:17; Psalm 2; 45:6; Isa 7:14; 9:9-7). The promise was renewed to King David, one of Abraham’s descendants (2 Sam 7:8-16), and was traced and recorded in the genealogies to Jesus (Matt 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). Jesus is the one who was “snatched up to God and to his throne” (Rev 12:5; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:1-11). And Jesus is mentioned by name in verse 17.
- Fourth, the angel Michael, who fought against the dragon (v. 7), is the angel who is over the nation of Israel (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1).
- Fifth, “the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus” are the Gentile (non-Jewish) believers who were adopted as “sons and daughters” and grafted into Israel (Rom 8:15–11:36).
- So this “great sign” that points to the existence and nature of God, the trustworthiness of Scripture, and the surety of its promises is that Israel still exists as a nation. Jesus was indeed born of them, He ascended into heaven, and the church exists all over the world. Let this ground and strengthen your belief in God, His Son, His word, and His promises.
- *The “other sign” is an enormous seven-headed dragon.*

### **Rev. 12:3 NIV**

**Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads.**

- The “dragon” is clearly identified as “that ancient serpent called the Devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray” in verse 9 and also in verse 12. He is seen as “enormous”—even though the woman is much larger, clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet. This dragon is red, the color of blood and fire, and it has seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns.
- The number seven in the Bible represents a complete state. So Satan with seven heads, is completely evil, through and through, and has seven small crowns on his heads (like a tiara) signifying authority of a lesser degree. This could be “self-crowned” authority he took for himself.
- The number ten in the Bible represents a complete set, such as the Ten Commandments (Exod 20), the Ten Plagues (Exod 7-12), the Ten Virgins (representing the complete church, Matt 25), and the Ten Minas (representing all disciples, Luke 19). The dragon has “ten horns” which represent ten kings (Rev 17:12), a complete set of rulers that the devil owns and uses for his purposes.
- This symbol of the devil communicates that he is completely evil (seven heads), has complete but limited authority (seven lesser crowns), and controls a complete set of kings (10 horns).
- The existence of the devil is “another sign” that points to the biblical reality of a cursed and corrupt world when we rebel against a good and holy God. The existence of evil produces in us a longing for justice and righteousness that only God can and will provide. If there was no good, we would not understand evil, so supernatural evil points to a supernatural good that helps us have faith in God’s overpowering and overwhelming goodness to overcome evil and make all things right.

- Both the “great sign” (the woman, her child, and her offspring) and the “other sign” (the devil) point us to spiritual realities that are in existence and are the powers and realities behind what we see and experience. These things are eternal, whereas everything else is temporary, so we are to “fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor 4:18).
- The second thing we can know for sure from this chapter is that there is an ongoing, furious spiritual war.

### **There is an ongoing furious spiritual war**

- Why would we conclude this? Because Scripture tells us that this is so. In Revelation 12 and following, we see it unfolding, and from this chapter, we learn that the devil sought to “devour” Christ as soon as He was born. Satan was using King Herod to try to kill Him (Matt 2:16-18). The truth is that the dragon, the serpent of old, has always been trying to kill this child by pursuing his “mother” (v. 13), which is the nation of Israel, God’s covenant people. From external enemies—Pharaoh and the surrounding nations—to enemies from within—the sin that drew them to follow other gods and intermarry with other nations—Israel has been relentlessly pursued by the dragon. They have been scattered among the nations and then gathered to their own land, all the time being both preserved by God and persecuted by the devil, even to this day.
- The devil is “filled with fury” (v. 12). He and his “angels” - demons (a third of the stars that were “swept away” by his tail, v. 4) know their time is short (v. 12). They know they have limited time until the final judgment; they know they will be ultimately defeated. Therefore, they are furious to do as much evil and damage as they can until that time. This is the world we’re living in! And it will get worse as the time grows shorter.
- The devil is “enraged” against the woman who brought forth Christ and then “wages war” against the rest of her “offspring,” which are those “who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus” (v. 17). This is us, and the church around the world. Consider all the persecution and suffering of Christians worldwide. This too will only get worse, culminating in the final days before Jesus returns.
- The devil is called the “Accuser” (v. 10). Satan has been our ruthless prosecutor, and he has used God’s good Law of righteousness against us, and against the Lord. “You cannot let these people into your kingdom. They have broken your own laws. They have rebelled against you! Judge, as powerful as you may be, you do not have the power to let sinners go free. And you certainly cannot build a kingdom from such rebels. Not even the authority of the mighty Messiah can do that.” That was Satan’s case, and it was airtight! Till Christ died for us to pay for our sins, and rose from the dead to conquer death.
- The children of God defeat the devil “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (v. 11). Those who believe in Jesus are found in Him. His blood covers our sin and frees us from its power and its penalty. We overcome the devil by testifying with our lips and our lives that Jesus is Lord and we are His brothers and sisters.
- Now, overcoming the devil does not mean that we will not be harmed or suffer loss. Note the second half of verse eleven: “They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” There is harm that is done and evil that comes against the people of God. Think of Job, who lost his children, fortune, and health but overcame the devil by maintaining his faith throughout. Think of those listed in Hebrews 11 who suffered incredible loss and even death but held onto their faith and received their eternal reward. Think of all of the trials and

suffering of all the saints who have come before and how they overcame their trials with the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

- We are of the same faith; we are those to whom the “great cloud of witnesses” testifies that they have kept the faith through all their trials and tribulations. We, too, can keep our faith, because we are one and the same. There is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one hope, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all in all (Eph 4:4-5).
- So we are to be watchful and aware of the devil’s schemes (I Peter 5:8), putting on the “full armor of God” and wielding the “sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” and “praying at all times” (Eph. 6:11-16). “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor 10:4-6). The “flood” that “spews out of the devil’s mouth” (v. 15) is the lies and the deceptions that are ultimately against the knowledge of God and His true character and plan, that are working to “drown and destroy” us. We fight the dragon with the truth of God’s Word—which is the testimony of Jesus and the fact that the blood of Jesus was given on our behalf.

## **Conclusion**

- As we have seen from Revelation 12, God has given us powerful signs pointing to eternal spiritual realities and alerting us to the furious spiritual war we are part of.
- The imagery of the glorious woman, the ruling male child, and the ferocious dragon vividly remind us that our earthly experiences are profoundly intertwined with unseen heavenly battles.
- Knowing this equips us with courage and faith. We are reminded that our victory is secure through Christ, whose blood and testimony empower us to overcome Satan’s schemes. Therefore, let us remain vigilant, grounded in God’s truth, and steadfast in our testimony of Jesus Christ, no matter the trials we face.
- Let us fight confidently, equipped with the full armor of God, knowing our eternal victory is assured by Him who has overcome the world.

***Our prayer team is available to pray with you after the service near the “Prayer” sign at the front of the sanctuary and also in the prayer room, next to the offices.***

## **Questions for Growth Groups**

1. How does understanding the signs and symbols in Revelation 12 strengthen your faith in God and His Word?
2. In what ways do you see evidence of spiritual warfare in your life or the world today? How does this awareness change the way you respond?
3. Revelation 12:11 mentions overcoming the devil by “the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.” How practically can you apply this in your own life?
4. Reflect on verse 11, “they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” What does this radical commitment look like for you personally today?
5. What “flood” of deception or lies do you see the enemy using in our culture? How can believers practically combat these lies?
6. How does knowing that the devil’s time is short (verse 12) impact your sense of urgency or the way you prioritize your life?
7. What specific action will you take this week to “hold fast to your testimony about Jesus” and to stand firm against spiritual attacks?