**Revelation**

*Lesson 25 – Revelation 12:7-17*

* We’re in the middle of this vision of the woman, child, and dragon. By way of reminder, the woman = God’s people (OT & NT), the child = Christ, the dragon = Satan.

*Verses 7-12: Michael and the Dragon*

1. Because Christ won the victory and has ascended to God and received a rod by which to rule the nations (verse 5), there are consequences and one of those consequences detailed here is that Satan is kicked out of heaven. Verse 8 says there was no longer any place for them in heaven and verse 9 says Satan (who is the devil, a serpent, and dragon) and his angels were thrown down to the earth.
2. Before the victory of Christ via crucifixion and resurrection, Satan had direct access to the throne of God.
   1. Job 1:6 – “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.”
   2. Job 2:1 – “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.”
   3. Zechariah 3:1 – “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.”
   4. Luke 10:17-18 – “**17**The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” **18**And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”
3. The angel Michael is described as a chief prince (Daniel 10:13), a representative over God’s people (Daniel 10:21), an archangel (Jude 9) and here as the commander of an army leading the battle against Satan and his army. In those Daniel references, Michael is seen as a close associate and helper to the Son of Man (pre-Incarnate Jesus) who are pictured as fighting against the demonic rulers over Persia and Greece (nations who were oppressing God’s people).
4. So when Christ wins the battle on earth, Michael is leading the battle in heaven. So Satan’s abilities have been curtailed and limited in an extra-special way now that the Messiah has come. Satan no longer has direct access to God.
5. Matthew 12:26-29 – “And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? **27**And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. **28**But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. **29**Or how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.” Satan as a “strong man” has been bound by the Incarnate ministry of Jesus Christ so that Satan’s power is now limited (not completely erased) so that the kingdom of God may rob Satan of those whom God has chosen and rescue them out of Satan’s kingdom.
6. In this section, 2 primary functions of Satan are highlighted – 1) “the deceiver of the whole world” [verse 9] and 2) “the accuser of our brothers” [verse 10]. He deceives the world and He accuses God’s people of sin.
7. Verses 10-12 reveals another hymn of praise which summarizes what John is seeing in this vision.
8. “Verse 11 summarizes the purpose of the whole chapter and especially of vv. 7-12, which is to assure believers who encounter Satanic evil on earth that evil has been defeated, even though it seems otherwise. Christians can be assured that the serpent begins to battle against their bodies only after he has lost the battle over their souls. This expresses one of the major themes of the book: the suffering of Christians is a sign, not of Satan’s victory, but of the saints’ victory over him because of their belief in the triumph of the cross, with which their suffering identifies them.” –Greg Beale
9. In verse 12, in the midst of this hymn of praise to God, there is a declaration of woe upon the earth. Satan is full of fury because he has lost his position in and access to heaven. He also intensifies his fury because he knows that his time is short. Satan’s power has been limited but he’s unleashes all that he has left because he’s a sore loser and he know he doesn’t have very long. This short time has been represented variously as 1,260 days, 42 months, 3.5 years, or “times and time and half a time.” Satan’s continued ability to persecute and accuse Christians while keeping the ungodly deceived is limited even in its duration, but the sovereignty of God.

*Verses 13-17: Persecution of the Woman/People of God*

1. So Satan’s wrath is great and his access is now constrained to the earth so Satan throws all of his attention toward God’s people. Vern Poythress writes, “Having failed to destroy Christ (12:4-5), the Dragon tries to destroy the people of Christ.”
2. But God bears His people on eagles’ wings. 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.” God’s rescue of Israel from Egypt becomes a picture of God’s rescue of the Church from Satan. And where did Israel go after Egypt? The wilderness which is where the Church is depicted as going. The Church right now is in the wilderness. We don’t look victorious even though Christ has already won the victory for us.
3. And while in the wilderness the church is nourished by God for “time, times, and half a time.”
4. Elijah was in the wilderness for 3.5 years when it did not rain (James 5:17) and the faithful people of God looked so diminished in the midst of false worship and persecution, that Elijah thought he was the only one left, but God said He had reserved 7,000 for Himself. The Church was there but it was extremely small, but God fed Elijah those 3.5 years in the wilderness. This becomes the picture of the Church. God’s presence with Israel for 40 years in the wilderness where God feeds them manna, God’s presence with Elijah for 3.5 years in the wilderness, both are pictures applied to the Church’s experience here on Earth. This earth is the wilderness and the Church is heavily persecuted and there will come a day when the Church will look dead and defeated but then comes the victory. In the meantime, God nourishes us with His indwelling Spirit, corporate worship, the sacraments, etc.
5. Satan sends forth a river out of his mouth to sweep away the woman with a flood but the earth swallows up the river. Satan is seen as using his words to destroy people like the flood in Noah’s day destroyed people. Waves of water is a picture throughout the OT to talk about persecution of God’s people (2 Samuel 22:5, Ps 18:4,6; 46:3; 66:12; Isa 43:2) and it’s also a picture of God’s judgment on those who resist Him (Isa 8:7-8; 17:12-13; Jer. 46:8; Hosea 5:10). Exodus 15:12 says that “the earth swallowed” Pharaoh’s armies in the Red Sea when the Lord stretched out His right hand. The Lord caused the Earth to swallow the families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in Numbers 16:12-14. So a swallowing Earth is a picture of the Lord’s protection over His people.
6. William Hendriksen summarizes this section thusly: “He directs his fury against the Church because the Church has brought forth the Christ. But the Lord protects His people: He bears them on eagles’ wings. In the desert of affliction, this earthly sojourn, He has prepared a place for them and nourishes them with the manna of the Word. Here the Church resides ‘away from the face of the serpent,’ that is, away from Satan’s most direct and deadly attack. The devil cannot destroy her. True, the evil one tries to engulf the Church in a stream of lies, delusions, religious ‘-isms,’ philosophical falsehoods, political utopias, quasi-scientific dogmas, but the true Church is not fooled. This failure to deceive the Church makes the devil very angry. He is determined to direct his attack against ‘the rest of the woman’s seed,’ that is, against individual believers.”

**Message for Us**

1. Verse 11 says that one way believers have conquered Satan is by opening their mouths and testifying about Jesus Christ which demonstrates that they love Jesus even more than their own lives. The implication of this is that if we are not opening our mouths we are demonstrating that we love our own lives more than Jesus Christ. Additionally, if our mouths are not openly proclaiming Christ then that’s stymieing both Christ’s victory and our victory over Satan. What do you love more – your own life or Jesus Christ?
2. “Satan only wins when we love our lives more than we love God. When we allow our hearts to be captured by earthly comfort and find that we would do anything and everything to procure more, preserve what we have, promote it, make it comfortable, insulate it, etc. Too many of us love our lives illegitimately; there is a good and legal love of life (I’m not talking about that; celebrate life, enjoy it, etc.). This is an over-protective concern for personal comfort and convenience and peace and prosperity and the resultant energy and life-style designed to perpetuate it. Satan wins whenever we treasure anything more than Jesus.” –Sam Storms
3. “One of Satan's primary weapons is the lie. He is committed to deceiving you into believing you are not what, in fact, you are, and that you cannot do what, in fact, you can. Satan will try to persuade you that you are: a failure, a fool, of no use to God or other Christians, worthless, an embarrassment to Christ, that you are wasting your time to confess your sins (God won't listen), that you are inferior to other believers, destined always to fall short of their successes, that you are a hopeless victim of your past and helpless to change your future, that you are a pathetic excuse for a Christian, that you are owned by Satan, that you are now what you will always be (there’s no hope for improvement), that you are stupid and beyond the reach of prayer, etc.” –Sam Storms We fight back against Satan by reminding ourselves of God’s promises and the work He has done in Christ Jesus.
4. Satan’s rampaging on earth is a reflection of his defeat in heaven which is a sign of his ultimate doom to come. Every time you see the wicked prosper or evil triumph here on earth, remind yourself that it’s only because Satan has lost the war and Christ has won.
5. While we are in the wilderness, we have God’s provision and protection. Hear the promise of Isaiah 40:28-31:  
    Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 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.
6. “The devil’s fury and wrath is now directed at the “rest of her offspring.” That’s you and me! Satan hates you. He hates everything about the church, the people of God. He hates those “who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus” (v. 17).” –Sam Storms