



Sermon Title: UNVEILED: Jesus in the Book of Revelation Part 3 – The Dragon Slayer

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. When were you first introduced to Jesus?
2. In one sentence, describe your impression of the Book of Revelation.

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Review the complicated nature of 'Apocalyptic' literature.

Further info: <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Apocalyptic-Literature>

How is the message always the same in spite of numerous scholarly interpretations?

2. Why would John's vision have been encouraging to his first readers?
3. Revisit the descriptions of the woman, the infant and the dragon in John's vision:
 - a) Compare the symbols describing the woman with the wording of Gen 37:9-11 (Joseph's dream). What / who does the woman represent?
 - b) What do the various descriptors reveal about the dragon? How does Genesis 3:15 prophesy what will happen?
 - c) The male child is the Messiah. How often in the NT does Satan try to destroy him? How is Psalm 2:1-9 reflected here?
4. What further details about this situation do we learn in vv 7-9?
Where does the conflict take place? Why can we consider this a 'cosmic war'? Who is involved?
5. 'In His Sovereign wisdom for His own glory, God has allowed Satan to live and even rebel against His Kingdom.' (Pastor Ashwin)
Why is it important for the believer to understand this clearly?
6. How does the following verses relate to the phrase 'her child was snatched up to God and to his throne' (Rev 12:5) John 12:31-33; Colossians 2:15; 1 John 3:8
7. Pastor Ashwin says that the key verse in the entire book of Revelation is 12:11.
What are the two ways Satan is defeated? Why is he still fighting?
What is my responsibility as a believer to participate in the battle to 'defang' Satan and to bring about the 'kingdom of God' on earth (v. 12:10)?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Take on Pastor Ashwin's challenge: Share your testimony with at least one person this week and tell what has Jesus done for you?
2. How can the group pray for a battle that you might be facing?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

This week's writers:

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THE WORD (NIV)

Revelation 12:1-12

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."

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Genesis 37:9-11

⁹ Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."¹⁰ When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?"¹¹ His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Psalm 2:1-9

John 12:31-33

³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

Colossians 2:15

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

1 John 3:8

The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.



The **Book of Revelation** is not only about end time prophecies — but it is a revelation of a Person — the Lord Jesus. The book was primarily written to reveal Jesus in His greatness and majesty instead of the Jesus who is mild mannered, passive, laidback, and non-offensive. The early Church was experiencing major persecutions under the Roman emperor Domitian. Heavily outnumbered they didn't see how this small fledgling movement was going to withstand such external pressures. They needed perspective on what was happening and they needed to see Jesus as the reigning King who would one day return to set things right. Today we, too, need such a perspective and Revelation gives us this.

Revelations 12:1-12 presents Jesus as the Dragon Slayer. Chapter 12 is the heart of the book of Revelation, giving context to the early Church's sufferings. There is a cosmic war that was taking place in the unseen realm of the spiritual world and its repercussions are felt in the physical world. It is the battle between the Kingdom of Light and the powers of darkness, between good and evil, between God and the devil.

God doesn't have to sweat in this contest with the devil — in fact he could take Satan out in less than a nano-second if He chose to. But in His Sovereign wisdom for His own glory — God has allowed Satan to live and even rebel against His Kingdom. God is glorified when, in spite of Satanic opposition, we will continue to love Jesus. To this end, God has allowed Satan to live — the end result will lead to the praise of God's name. We are engaged in a war of mammoth proportions.

The coming of Jesus is an invasion. Satan had usurped the authority from Adam's race by causing them to fall into temptation and live independently of God but Jesus came to take the authority back and restore everything to where God intended.

Revelation is complicated and although scholars may have differing interpretations, the basic message remains - Jesus is triumphant and all who belong to Him are on the winning side.

There are three primary characters in this story — a pregnant woman, a fierce dragon and a new born child. The pregnant woman is a symbolic figure pointing to something beyond. She is clothed with the sun — her beauty. She has the moon under her feet — her authority. There are 12 stars on her head. It is similar to Joseph's dream in Genesis 37. It is a picture of God's people in the Old Testament - 12 tribes of Israel. John's intent in this passage is to explain the persecution of the believing community that consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. That's why so much of the emphasis in Rev 12 is on the persecution of the woman and her offspring by the dragon. The latter section of the chapter refers to God's people in the New Covenant — the Church that has become an object of Satan's rage. Theologian John Stott states: "She appears in fact to be not an individual at all but a corporate figure representing the church of both Old and New Testament in continuity."

The dragon is not a literal monster but he is a symbol or metaphor. He is clearly identified in Rev 12:9 as the devil or Satan. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, leads the whole world astray. He is the enemy of God and all God's people. The word 'devil' means accuser or slanderer. 'Satan' means enemy or adversary. All these are descriptors of the dragon! In Rev:12:3-4 the dragon is said to have seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its head and it has a tail that swept stars out of the sky and flung them to earth. It is waiting for the woman to give birth so it can devour her child. Seven heads make for a creature not easily destroyed and ten horns symbolize great power. Crowns represent royalty and Satan is referred to a prince of this world. This dragon is terrifying, full of evil. In Genesis 3:15 Satan hears the prophetic gospel message when God tells him that the woman's offspring (Jesus) will crush him. Jesus is the dragon slayer!

The child to be born is the Messiah who will destroy the works of Satan and establish the Kingdom of God. (Rev. 12:5; Ps.2) That explains why the dragon is awaiting the arrival of the child — with the intent of destroying him. Throughout the Gospels, we read about repeated attempts of Satan to destroy Jesus' life. But the greatest attempt to devour the child was the crucifixion. When Jesus breathed his last, the dragon thought he had gotten rid of his arch enemy. But, "her child was snatched up to God and to his throne." (Rev. 12:5) This refers to Christ's Ascension, establishing Jesus as the reigning King. The Ascension sealed Jesus' victory and publicly declared that He has been enthroned — Jesus has been installed as King — Satan is not king neither is Caesar nor any earthly ruler - Jesus is Lord! Christ's mission was to destroy the enemy - to slay the dragon- and to reverse the effects of the Fall. (1John 3:8) Ironically the very means that Satan used to try to destroy Christ was the same means (the cross) that Christ used to triumph over Satan and all the principalities and powers. (Col. 2:15)

John shares a second vision (Revelation 12:7-9) that again points to the victory of Jesus over Satan. In a war that broke out in heaven, the dragon and his angels are hurled out of heaven and down to earth. This event can be seen as the heavenly counterpart of the earthly victory Jesus had won through his death, resurrection and ascension. Satan is 'defanged' (disarmed). The prince of this world will be driven out of heaven when Jesus is lifted up. (John 12:31-33)

Until this time, Satan, it seems, has been able to go before God and bring accusations to Him about man. (Rev. 12:10)

The enemy cannot accuse any more as he is barred from heaven and there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because all our sins have been nailed to the cross and we have been set free!

So why is there still such evil in the world? John's answer to this question is found in Rev. 12:12. Satan knows his time is short and he has lost the battle. He wants to inflict maximum damage before he is consigned to the lake of fire. He is directing his rage against the people of God — with the sole intention of destroying the Church.

Satan has been decisively defeated through the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. While all his attempts to destroy the Church are futile - the battle is very real and we have an active role to play. Christian believers are called to overcome Satan. The key text in the entire book of Revelation is v.11. Christians are called to overcome Satan by what Christ has done for us and by the word of our testimony. Interestingly, the Greek word for "testimony" is the same word for "martyr." (Rev. 12:11)

The martyrs in the early church had a choice — either deny Jesus and live or hold fast to their testimony and die. They knew the secret - only way you will lose this spiritual battle is by switching sides or by quitting the race. That's true for us today!

Whether it is a trial or temptation — when the battle is raging fiercely — hold fast to your testimony — stay on course with Jesus — the only way you will lose is by switching sides or quitting the race. Revelation encourages us it's only a matter of time - Satan will finally be vanquished and thrown into the lake of fire — that will be the final slaying of the dragon. Before we know Jesus will return and the dragon will be no more. Halleluiah!