

Hold Fast to the Saving Power of the Blood of the Lamb

February 16, 2020



Open: How do you tend to approach interpreting Revelation? How has that changed over time?

Read & Discuss: Revelation 12

1. How would you describe the various conflicts between characters in this chapter? How do you think the apocalyptic (*prophecy of the end times*) nature of this book should influence our attempts to interpret and apply this text?
2. What are the dragon's goals in this chapter? Why would the dragon seek to "devour" the child (v. 4)? What does the dragon's defeat mean in heaven (vv. 10, 12) and on earth (vv. 12-17)?
3. Why do you think Satan would be so intent on accusing believers before God day and night (v. 10)? What does it mean to overcome Satan's accusations by the "blood of the lamb" and the "word of our testimony" (v. 11)? How can we help a fellow Christian who is no longer under God's condemnation, but who still feels condemned and defeated by self-accusation?
4. On the assumption that verse 12 pertains to the present time and that Satan is active on earth, what should be our response? (Note also 1 Peter 5:8-9.)
5. What do the wings, wilderness and nourishment spoken of in verse 14 tell us about God's involvement among those who experience Satan's wrath? How would this message compare to the larger message of Revelation, which was written to persecuted believers?
6. Who are the "offspring" in v. 17? Why do you think they're described as "offspring," as those "who keep the commandments of God," and as those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus"?
7. How much thought and attention should we give to the supernatural powers at work around us? (See also Ephesians 6:10-13.) In what ways do you think you might have experienced conflict and/or support from heavenly beings (both good and evil)?

Apply: How can you better equip yourself for this type of spiritual warfare in the future?

Pray: Praise God for these truth that Jesus has defeated Satan's accusations. Pray for the church to be ready for the attacks of Satan's wrath.

Revelation 12

^[1] And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ^[2] She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. ^[3] And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. ^[4] His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. ^[5] She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, ^[6] and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

^[7] Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ^[8] but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ^[9] And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ^[10] And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ^[11] And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ^[12] Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

^[13] And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ^[14] But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. ^[15] The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. ^[16] But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. ^[17] Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

(ESV)