



Revelation 12

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it,
because the time is near. 1:3

[At the end of chapter 11,] the book of Revelation might be concluded. But there is more that God wants to reveal. John will now in Revelation 12-14 proceed to explain the underlying causes for all the hostility, opposition, and persecution of God's people on earth. ... The first 11 chapters form a whole in themselves – after which the book might well have ended. ... Chapter 12 is a transitional point in the book; it's a fresh beginning. Griffen, p.54, 55

Christian World View

It is the age long conflict between God and Satan that accounts for the persecution that the church experiences. Through his life, suffering, death, and resurrection Christ won the crucial battle on behalf of all of His people. But the devil still does not give up; he continues to struggle to enslave and destroy all of God's creatures and creation. All history from the victorious work of Christ on earth to the last day is the violent death struggle between Church and Satan, with God and Christ behind the Church. God's Word for Today study guide, Revelation, Griffen, p.54, 55

Interregnum

Chapters 12-14 are properly called an **interregnum** (Latin for “a period of time in between reigns”; a term to help understand the “End Times” and “Last Days”). While the reader of Revelation knows Christ is now enthroned in heaven (Ascension/Coronation of Revelation 5), the battle between His lordship and the lords of evil still rages on earth, and this world has not yet been brought fully under Christ's reign (Parousia).

The events depicted in this **interregnum** are **cosmic in character** because the actions depicted occur both above and on the earth. For what is portrayed before the eyes of John is nothing less than the cosmic war between God and the prince of darkness, a war that takes place in the heavens and then drops down to earth. This warfare between God and Lucifer is the source and cause of the warfare between God's people on earth and the forces of evil. **Revelation 12-14 is thus an exposition and an explanation of all that John sees happening on the earth from the time of Christ's ascension up to the end of this present world at Christ's return** ... That is, Revelation 12-14 visually explains to John why the events on earth are occurring. Revelation, Dr. L. Brighton, CPH, p. 325

This becomes our world view and understanding of the times

Overview of Revelation 12-22

The actors who play the major roles in this cosmic struggle are introduced in chapters 12-14. Then, in chapters 15-20, John depicts God's coming in judgment to destroy his enemies once and for all. Finally, in chapters 21-22 he describes the eternal future that awaits all the faithful people of God. God's Word for Today study guide, Revelation, Griffen, p.54, 55

Read Revelation 12:1-6

Scene I - The Woman and the Great Red Dragon

A “**sign**” in Scripture is a visible presentation which points to or explains something of the divine. Thus, the miracles of our Lord are often described as signs which reveal the true nature of Christ as the presence of God among men... The sign which John observes is a beautiful woman “clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.” **This woman personifies the people of God.** She is the church. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.313 *Specifically, the faithful remnant of the OT 12 Tribes of Israel.*

- † Before giving birth to the child, the woman symbolizes the people of Israel, God’s Old Testament church. After the child is born, the woman symbolizes the believers of the New Testament. God’s Word for Today study guide, *Revelation*, Griffen, p.56 (Note crown of 12 stars, not 24.)

- The Roman Catholic **falsely** teaches that this woman is **Mary**. **See sidebar** This vision is greater than Mary; its historical, and in 12:17, all Christians come from her. (Galatians 4:26)
- **Roman Catholic** commentators have historically gone to great lengths to demonstrate a connection between the glorious mother of John’s vision and the blessed Virgin Mary. **It is, however, unmistakably clear from the text that the emphasis here is not on an individual but on the entire community of faith, within which down through hundreds of generations the Messiah was finally born.**

Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.320-321



- † The woman represents the OT Church: review the term “**Messianic Prophecy**”.
- † The woman of the vision is arrayed in heavenly splendor as a **radiant bride**. The image depicts the church as she is seen by God, not from the perspective of men. ... The woman appears in her true heavenly and glorious character despite her seemingly fragile and uncertain earthly history. ... The language recalls the lover’s description of his beloved in the Song of Songs: “**Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?**” (Song of Songs 6:10) Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.316
- † The church is “**clothed with the sun.**” God has put around her the brilliant, sunlit glory of His Christ, signifying that in Christ and because of Him she stands in God’s holy presence.
- † The **victory** which God’s people have won in Christ over sin, death, and the devil is emphasized by the victor’s crown upon her head.
- † The **crown** is adorned with twelve stars. As previously noted, twelve in the numerology of Revelation is the number of the people of God, from the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of Christ. **Hence, the twelve stars in her victory crown confirm the identification of the woman as the personification of the church.** Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.318-319

12:2 Pain of Childbirth

The anguish of the woman about to give birth to her child represents the anxiety, torment and persecution endured by the people of God in the days preceding the birth of the Messiah.

† **THIS IS ADVENT!!** Remember the great prophecies: Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, Psalm 2:9, Luke 2:1-20, and Galatians 4:4-5. The image of the Messiah being born of the people of God is not unknown in Scripture. From the beginning, the prophesies had foretold that He would be born of a woman (Genesis 3:15). Paul cites the tracing of “the human ancestry of Christ” from them as the greatest distinction of Israel (Romans 9:5).

- 12:2 describes the mood of the season of Advent. In the years following Genesis 3:15 and the Fall of Man, the people of God yearned for their Redeemer. Their long centuries of eager, even painful, waiting were like that of a pregnant woman.



12:3 The Dragon

The second sign appears in the form of a *monstrous red dragon*. The contours of this monster are drawn in a colorful mosaic of Old Testament imagery.

† The term “**dragon**” is used thirteen times in the New Testament, all in the second half of the book of Revelation. In the imagery of the Old Testament “**Leviathan**” became a designation for the Satanic serpent whom the Lord shall destroy in the deliverance of His people - “*In that day, the Lord will punish with His sword, His fierce, great and powerful sword, Leviathan, that gliding serpent, Leviathan, the coiling serpent; He will slay the monster of the sea.*” (Isaiah 27:1).

† In Psalm 74:14, “**Leviathan**” is a monster with many heads. Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.322-323

† The dragon is John’s vision is “**enormous**”. This marks him as a being of unique magnitude and power. (Note though, that the dragon is a “sign”; not a “great sign” like the Woman.)

† The dragon’s color is a blazing “**red**” the color of fire, blood, and death. The color of this fearsome beast signals the mission upon which he has come. He comes from the fires of hell to serve the damning cause of the devil. Red is also the color of bloodshed.

† The vast reach of his cunning and power are represented by “**seven heads and ten horns.**” *The dragon’s appearance mocks and mimic that of the Lamb* (Cf. Revelation 5:6 and the seven horns and eyes of the Lamb). The **ten horns** of the dragon reflect the ten horns of the fourth beast in Daniel’s vision (Daniel 7:7). They signify his power and strength. The **crowns** upon the dragon’s heads are the royal crowns of a king. They once again reveal the devil’s character as “God’s ape,” as he imitates the Christ who is the true “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” who will wear many crowns upon His head



(Revelation 19:12). . . . The crowns upon the dragon's heads also indicate his ability to enlist the support of earthly kings and rulers in support of his cause (cf. Revelation 19:19). The powers of this world will consistently stand by his side in his bitter opposition to God and His people, for the devil is the god and prince of this world. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.323-325

12:4 A Third of the Stars

The image of stars swept down from the sky and hurled to the earth is drawn from **Daniel 8:10** where the action is carried out by the little horn of the beast. John modifies the image and now it is the tail of the mighty dragon that sweeps *“a third of the stars out of the sky.”*

- † The **stars of the heavens** are a popular symbol for angels in Scripture (cf. Judges 5:20; Job 38:7; Revelation 1:20). *The fall of the star from the sky is the downfall of the devil and the angels that followed him in his doomed rebellion against God* (cf. Isaiah 14:12; Luke 10:18; Revelation 9:11).
 - Not content with being creatures of God, certain angels wanted to be as God. They rebelled against Him to establish their own independence. Since then, they have sought to crush the power of God by destroying His creation. God's Word for Today study guide, *Revelation*, Griffen, p.58
 - **Historical Note:** **Lucifer** is a name for Satan, the fallen angel; In Isaiah 14:12; “O morning star” is translated “*Lucifier*” in the Latin Vulgate. “*Lucifier*” means “light bearer”; a Latin translation of the Hebrew “morning star”. cf. Isaiah 27:1; Luke 10:17-18.
 - 12:4 is the original fall; 12:9 is their binding at Christ's death, resurrection & ascension.
 - Remember: 2 Peter 2:4, Eph 6:12, Jude 6, John 8:44, 1 John 3:8
- † John once again uses **the symbolic third** to convey the fact that a significant minority of the angels joined Satan in his revolt (cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The mighty power of the dragon is illustrated by this most awful deed. This highest and most glorious of the angels, “anointed as a guardian cherub” (Ezekiel 28:11-19) seduced massive number of the heavenly host to rise up against the Creator. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.324-325

12:4 The Dragon vs. The Child

The OT Church/Remnant, pregnant with the promise of the Messiah, is presented as a woman about to give birth. The *huge red dragon* stands poised before the woman ready to devour the babe at the instant of its birth. Since the beginning, he has lived in dread of the fulfillment of the ancient promise that God would send a descendant of the woman **to crush the head of the serpent** (**Genesis 3:15**).

- † The verb “stood” is in the imperfect tense, indicating continuous, ongoing action. The dragon does not know when the promise will be fulfilled. He stands in constant readiness. This child must be destroyed. His grim intent is to *“devour her child the moment it was born.”* The image of the great dragon swallowing up the child is a picture of utter destruction.



† Jeremiah used the same language to describe the complete devastation of the kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians: “*Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured us...like a serpent he has swallowed us and filled his stomach with our delicacies, and then has spewed us out.*” (Jeremiah 51:34).

† Behind the power of the image lurks the ugly history of Herod’s soldiers rampaging through the streets of Bethlehem, their swords stained crimson with the blood of babies (Matthew 2:16-18). (In Church History, this is called the “Holy Innocents”)



† Jesus and Satan were locked in combat during Jesus’ time on earth: The Temptation, the miracles, casting out demons, Peter trying to stop Jesus (Mt 16:22), Satan filling Judas (John 13:2)

† Satan’s increasingly desperate efforts to destroy Jesus culminate in apparent success on Calvary. On the eve of His death, our Lord calmly declared: “*The ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over Me.*” (John 14:30) But in that “success” Satan’s cause is destroyed and the ancient prophecy that the serpent’s head will be crushed by the heel of the woman’s child is fulfilled. Dr. L.

L. White, Revelation, p.324-328

12:5 The Messiah Is Born!

The promised child, the Messiah is born. The wording of the descriptive phrase which follows is drawn from the messianic prophecy of Psalm 2:9: “*You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.*” The iron rod rule over the nations which the Psalmist predicts looks beyond the humiliation and meekness of Christ’s earthly life to the time of His glorious return in power. When all that was necessary “for us and for our salvation” was accomplished God recalled His Son to the right hand of His glory in heaven. Dr. L. L. White,

Revelation, p.326-328

† John’s phrase - “*her child was snatched up to God and to His throne*” encompasses the exaltation and enthronement of the incarnate Son of God as they were visibly demonstrated in **His Ascension**. It’s a **summary statement** of Jesus’ successful mission to save all people!



12:6 The Desert Wilderness

As Israel wandered in the desert wilderness for forty years prior to her entry into the Promised Land, so also the new Israel, the church of God in Christ, must also endure her time in the wilderness. **The fury of the dragon, frustrated in his attempt to destroy the child, now focuses upon the child’s mother.** Dr. L. L. White, Revelation, p.326-328

- † The duration of this wilderness wandering is **1,260 days**, (42 months -- 3 1/2 years) the characteristic designation for **the New Testament era** in Revelation. The details of the church's sojourn in the wilderness of this world, and of God's care for her, will be provided in subsequent verses but first the scene now shifts from earth to heaven.

Read Revelation 12:7-12

Scene 2 - The War in Heaven

The events described in verses 7-12 are the heavenly counterpart of the earthly events recorded in Verses 1-6. The vision of the woman and the dragon revealed one dimension of the struggle, the angelic war in heaven reveals the other.

The panoramic picture of heavenly war between Michael and the dragon is designed to present the successful accomplishment of mankind's redemption; the victory of Christ and the defeat of Satan. The salvation or damnation of humanity hung on the outcome of this conflict. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.334

12:7 Michael

Here in Revelation **Michael** is the champion of the host of heaven, leading the good angels in battle against the devil and his demons.

- † This climactic confrontation is not an historical account of the **original fall** of the devil and his angels. **It is, instead, a symbolic description of the effect of the incarnation and exaltation of Christ already described in the previous scene.** This battle rages "in heaven" . . . this is the spiritual realm, in contrast to the physical world of time and space.

- † The point at issue in this war is not the control of heaven, which could never have been in doubt, nor the ability of the devil and his angels to appear before God in heaven subsequent to their fall into sin. Job 1:6-12 clearly indicates that when it suits God's purpose this can indeed occur. When Revelation reports "**But he was not strong enough and they lost their place in heaven**" **the point at issue is the devil's ability to stand before God as the accuser of mankind, demanding their just condemnation** (cf. Zechariah 3:1-10; **Rev 12:10b**). *By His righteous life and innocent death Christ has removed the basis for the accusation against us. His resurrection, ascension, and enthronement at the right hand of God demonstrate that the Father has accepted the substitutionary atonement of His Son and that now we stand before God justified. The victorious Christ is now our Advocate, our Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) before the bar of divine justice. See Romans 5:, 8:1!* Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.328-331

- † Satan, the accuser, is pictured as a prosecuting attorney who appears before God regularly to bring charges against the Christians. First he tempts them to sin and then, having accomplish this purpose, he hurries to the throne of God to demand that they be punished. *Becker p. 188.*
- † This is the context of the heavenly hymn of praise which follows: "**For the Accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.**" (Vs. 10)



Michael the Archangel

Michael is mentioned in Revelation 12:7 as battling Satan, and overpowering him. Here is a quote concerning the identity of Michael:

“The leader of the army of the good angels is Michael. The name Michael is really a Hebrew question which means, “Who is like God?” The identity of Michael has been disputed, also in Lutheranism. **Some have argued that Michael is a name for the Savior**, who in his human nature is “like God,” having received all the divine attributes in the incarnation. It can be argued also that the word “archangel” might mean not “ruling angel” but “the ruler of the angels.” Add to this the fact that the word archangel is never used in the plural, which might lead us to infer that there is only one. This could then lead to the conclusion that this ruler of the angels is the Son of God. He is spoken of as such in the book of Joshua. The “man” who appeared in a vision to Joshua at Jericho and who is later called “the Lord,” or Yahweh,” calls himself “the captain of the host of the Lord” (Joshua 5:13-6:2). In that place the second person of the Holy Trinity really calls himself the ruler of the angel armies. Also supportive of this view is what is said about Michael in Daniel 12:1. There Michael is called “the great prince who protects your people,” and it is said that when he arises, Daniel’s people will be delivered. Those words could easily be applied to the Savior.

There are also passages that weigh rather heavily against the view that Michael is the Lord Jesus. In Jude it is said that Michael did not dare to bring a railing accusation against the devil but said instead, “The Lord rebuke you!” (Jude 9). One could perhaps argue that those words could be understood of Christ against the background of the Trinity, which enables the “Lord” to speak of the “Lord” as a distinct person. But this would hardly do justice to the context. A fairly decisive argument lies in the words of Daniel, who identifies Michael as “one of the chief princes” (10:13). This seems to identify Michael as **one of a number of angels of superior rank**, and this, by the way, is the only substantial biblical evidence for the claim that there are more archangels than one.

Actually it makes little difference whether one considers Michael to be a created angel or the “Angel of the Lord,” who is the “captain of the hosts of the Lord.” The significance of these verses is that there was a great battle fought between the good and evil angels in connection with the redemptive work of Christ. In this battle the devil and his angels were decisively defeated. They were thrown out of the sky to the earth.” Siegbert W. Becker, *Revelation The Distant Triumph Song*, Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1988, pp186-187



12:9 The **Dragon** is The **Devil**

The leader of the fallen angels is completely identified and unmasked. He who is the master of the disguise, the masquerade, and the counterfeit (2 Corinthians 11:14) is clearly revealed in his true nature. He is “**that ancient serpent... who leads the whole world astray.**” The allusion is to the Fall of mankind in the beginning and the serpent through which the devil beguiled the woman and brought about the condemnation of our race (Genesis 3). Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.334-335

† Each of the two titles disclose his activities and his role.

- **Devil**... means “slanderer, false accuser” – liar

- *Satan* . . . means “adversary,” “enemy,” or “accuser.”
- *His delight is to demand our damnation so that we may share an eternity in Hell with him.*

† **The devil and his legions were decisively defeated, but they were not destroyed.** Their power was broken, but it has not yet been eliminated.

† **Hurled down** is a powerful phrase. Jesus expressed a similar concept when He said: “*Now is the judgement of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.*” (John 12:31) After the seventy-two disciples preached the gospel throughout Palestine, Jesus responded: “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*” (Luke 10:18) **Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection have resulted in drastically curtailing the devil’s role of deception and nullifying his role of slanderer.** That is the meaning of the image of the devil and his angels being cast out of heaven and hurled down to the earth. This is not a matter of physical location, as if such things could be pertinent to angels, but of power and possibility. **The Gospel of salvation will now go forth to the whole world. The devil and his demons cannot stop or silence that witness.** The devil will continue his deceptive work. He will oppose and he will oppress, but the “gates of hell” shall not prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18).

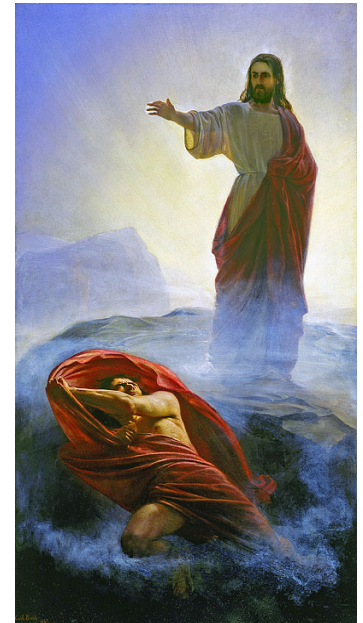
Side-by-side with the great physical struggle that men saw in Gethsemane and on Calvary, there was a great battle being fought in the spiritual realm. Becker p. 186

Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.334-337

- Satan is “bound” (Rev 20:1-3) during these End Times so that the Gospel can go forth into all the world! *This “binding” is the same idea as “being cast out of Heaven” but using a different word picture.*

Satan has been CAST DOWN!

No matter what you’ve done your past, no matter how often the devil tries to remind you of your past failures --- even though you have confess them to God--- when you “set your mind on heavenly things (Col 3:2), god assures you that your accuser, Satan, will not be in heaven to accuse you any longer. He is been **THROWN DOWN**. Yes Satan, has been thrown out of heaven and will not be present to torture you any longer with the guilty conscience. You may if heard the good news of God’s forgiveness and Jesus Christ spoken to your heart many, many times. And, you rejoice in this good news! Yet, the devil keeps reminding you of your past failures: bad words you have spoken, promises you have not kept, evil thoughts you have had, and your failure to truly love your parents, which you may now dearly regret. Yes, in this life the devil will keep bringing up your past mistakes. However, if you keep your mind on things above and not on earthly things, these temptations may at times be able to discourage you, but they can never destroy you. Good News, Heaven, Issue 17



12:10 The Song of Praise

The triumphant cry of victory now resounds throughout heaven. The song not only celebrates, but interprets and explains the significance of the heavenly war between Michael and the dragon. . . . This is the song of the saints in glory, rejoicing in that which God has done for them.

- † What is it that has been completely accomplished? –
 - **salvation** is God's action in rescuing his people from death and damnation and the safety and security which results from that action.
 - **power** is the divine power of God which has accomplished this salvation through the incarnation and exaltation of the Son which broke and defeated the power of the dragon.
 - **kingdom** refers to His rule of grace and salvation reaching out to save men everywhere despite all the efforts of Satan. **Christ continues to set men free!**
 - **authority** the power delegated to our Lord by the Father to implement and carry out the plan of salvation (cf. Matthew 28:18). Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.337-338
- † Here is an **intriguing observation**: although the vision depicts this battle in military terms, it is essentially a legal battle between opposing counsel in which the loser is disbarred. The devil's role in all this is particularly malevolent in that he is the instigator of the very sins for which he demands punishment.

10b Summary of Vision

"For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."

This is the core of the vision's meaning. The basis for Satan's accusations against the saints has been taken away. He is no longer able to successfully lodge a charge against any one of God's elect (cf. **Romans 8:1, 33-34**). Our sins are covered over in the blood of Christ. The pure white robe of His perfect righteousness conceals the filthy rags of our unrighteousness. Now we stand before the divine judge justified and righteous! Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.337-338

12:11 Blood of the Lamb

Christ is the Lamb of God whose innocent blood has taken away the sin of the world. It is that atoning sacrifice which has destroyed the basis for the Adversary's accusations. The blood of the Lamb is the reason for our acquittal. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.337-339

12:11 The Power of the Word

The faithful testimony of God's people is the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the sacrificial death of Christ. **They believed and spoke about the kerygma!** For many, down through the ages the price of that faithful testimony has been a **martyr's death**.

God's people overcome Satan by the blood of Jesus, shed for their forgiveness, and the word of their testimony, that is, the gospel which they share with others while here on earth. Note that they are even willing to give up their physical life in the struggle knowing that they will live forever with the Lord. God's Word for Today study guide, *Revelation*, Griffen, p.135

***We have supernatural help against the Great Red Dragon:
God the Holy Spirit as He works through His Word and Sacraments!***

12:12 Joy in Heaven; Woe on Earth

While the **church triumphant** in heaven rejoices, the **church militant** on earth remains locked in deadly struggle. The 1,260 days are not yet complete. The relentless assault continues. Satan's defeat has only served to intensify his fury. **He is determined to do all within his now limited power to drag the souls of men down into the fires of hell. He know full well that his time is running out as the world hurtles on toward judgement.** It is truly ironic that "the troubles of the persecuted righteous arise not because Satan is too strong, but because he is beaten." Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.339

- † Because of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the Devil knows that he has lost the war. But like a defeated tyrant who knows that the day of total defeat can only be delayed he is intent upon taking as many people as possible with him to destruction. Becker p. 190

Read Revelation 12:13-17

Scene 3 - The Attack on Christians

The scene shifts back to the earth again and to the woman in the wilderness. The dragon, frustrated in his attempt to destroy the child, now vents his anger upon the woman. The dragon furiously pursues the woman into the wilderness. Behind the dramatic imagery of the vision lies this truth --- **the devil was unable to destroy the Christ and prevent the accomplishment of the plan of salvation.** His kingdom was shattered and his power curtailed. He turns now to persecute and punish the people of God.

By **deception and false doctrine within**
and **persecution and oppression without**,
he desperately seeks to limit the proclamation of the pure Gospel.

Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.340-341

Because of the blood of the lamb and the testimony of the church Satan has lost his power to accuse. But as chapter 9 teaches, he still seeks to obscure and silence that testimony with the smoke of the Abyss, and vast numbers of locusts and warhorses, which are deceptive false teachings and ideas. In addition, as chapters 10 and 11 show, he persecutes the Holy Christian Church.

12:14 Eagles wings

In describing God's loving care for the OT Israelites in the wilderness, God used the image of an eagle protecting its young: "**You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to Myself.**" (Exodus 19:4; note also Deuteronomy 32:10-11; cf. also Psalm 91:4) John calls upon this effective Old Testament image to describe **God's providential care** of His Church throughout her time of persecution. White, *Revelation*, p.340-341



† The fact that the dragon is once again referred to as “the serpent” --- recalling the original temptation in Eden to doubt the Word of God and usurp His place --- suggests that the nature of **the devil’s attack upon the Church will be primarily spiritual**, that is, an assault upon the truth of the Word and substance of the faith.

† The place of refuge which the vision depicts is not a physical location but **the spiritual refuge of God’s Word** and the unfailing comfort and courage which it will provide in time of trouble. This is not a promise of deliverance from deception and persecution but a promise of endurance through deception and persecution.

† It is as Luther declares in his great battle hymn of the Reformation:

**Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us.
We tremble not, we fear no ill, they shall not overpower us.
This world’s prince may still, scowl fierce as he will;
He can harm us none. He’s judged the deed is done.
One little Word* can fell him.**

*** One Little Word**

Luther himself identified this as the word he had in mind. When speaking about one of the books written against him, Luther said, “For all such books, even if there were as many as thousands of them written every day and every hour..., are very easily refuted with the single word, ‘Devil, you lie,’ just as that haughty beggar Dr. Luther sings so proudly and boldly in those words of his hymn, ‘One little word shall fell him’” (Luther’s Works, American Edition, vol. 41, pp. 185-186).

12:14 A Time, Times, And Half A Time

This is the characteristic three and one half (1,260 days --- 42 months), the broken seven, the limited period of persecution that comprises the entire New Testament era.

12:15 The Gushing Water

The cascade of “water like a river” which gushes forth from his gaping jaws is intended for nothing less than extermination --- **“to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.”** The metaphor of an overflowing flood occurs quite frequently in the Old Testament to describe judgement and persecution (i.e. Psalm 18:4,16; 32:6; 46:3; 88:7; Isaiah 43:2; Daniel 11:10,22).

† The flood proceeding from the serpent’s mouth portrays the devil’s efforts to destroy the church by **deception and false teaching**. Just as the serpent deceived the first woman with **lies** and **half-truths** so he now attempts to deceive the latter day woman with his **lying words**. It is evident from the letters to the seven churches in the first vision that false teachers were already infiltrating the young congregation and causing significant disruption and defection. White, Revelation, p.341

- This **river of lies and deception** is the devil’s cruel counterpart to the “river of the water of life” which flows bright as crystal from God’s heavenly throne (Revelation 21:1). But this river does not bring life. It brings only death.
- As Satan carries out that work, lies flow out of his mouth like water. His liquid lies seep into every nook and cranny of our world. They seep into our homes, our churches, and our hearts. They come in many different shapes and sizes. But one common thread ties them all together. More than anything else, the devil wants us to believe one grand lie, the same lie that he used to get Adam and Eve to bite: **God doesn’t love you.** <http://welshymnal.com/blog/whats-word>



† So now in John's vision "*the earth opening its mouth and swallowing the river*" signifies God's care and His deliverance of His people.

12:17 Christians are Targets

The dragon's continued failure to destroy the woman serves only to enrage him further. He was unable to kill the woman's child. His attempt to engulf the woman herself in the torrent of the river also ended in abject failure. But still he will not desist. The campaign of extermination continues. His anger is redirected toward "the rest of her offspring." The faithful remnant, the true Christian Church, "*those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus*" --- now become the target of his frantic wrath. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.343-344

EVERY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, SCHOOL, HOME, AND INDIVIDUAL (CONSCIENCE) IS UNDER ATTACK!

While the gates of hell will not prevail against the church, individual believers remain subject to the attacks of the dragon and may be destroyed. Those who are steadfast in their obedience to the Word and commandments of God; those who will not compromise or yield to the world's relentless pressure to conform; those who faithfully and consistently testify to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ --- these are they who become the dragon's prime target. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.344

Ephesians 6:10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

See Revelation 13:1

"And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea." - This change in the dragon's position signals the transition to the next scene in which the two monstrous agents through which the dragon will carry out his war against the faithful offspring of the woman will be presented. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.344

The rise of the beast from the Sea and the second beast from the earth is the devil's opportunity to find willing tools to serve his purposes and persecute Christians. Becker, p.193 paraphrase



ADDITIONAL NOTES & THOUGHTS

Angel of the Abyss = Abaddon = Apollyon = Destroyer = *Satan*

Satan is the Destroyer in Rev 9:11; and In Revelation 12 Satan attempts to destroy:

- ✓ destroy the male child (Christ) [12:4]
- ✓ destroy the woman (Church) [12:13]
- ✓ destroy the earth and the sea (unbelievers) [12:12]
- ✓ destroy the woman's offspring (Christians) [12:17]

The Dragon
Accuses
The Son
ABSOLVES!

WAR OF WORDS Revelation 12:10b

Who is our **"Advocate"**? is the central element.

The dragon advocates for Law, guilt, and death:

The Son advocates for peace and forgiveness through His death and resurrection

ONLY ONE ADVOCATE IS ALLOWED IN HEAVEN! "At the center of this warfare in heaven is Satan's ability to stand in God's holy presence and accuse the saints of God." Brighton, p.333ff

Satan is our enemy

For no one believes how the devil opposes and resists them, and cannot suffer that any one teach or believe aright. And it hurts him beyond measure to suffer his lies and abominations, that have been honored under the most specious pretexts of the divine name, to be exposed, and to be disgraced himself, and, besides, be driven out of the heart, and suffer such a breach to be made in his kingdom. Therefore he chafes and rages as a fierce enemy with all his power and might, and marshals all his subjects, and, in addition, enlists the world and our own flesh as his allies. 63] For our flesh is in itself indolent and inclined to evil, even though we have accepted and believe the Word of God. The world, however, is perverse and wicked; this he incites against us, fans and stirs the fire, that he may hinder and drive us back, cause us to fall, and again bring us under his power. 64] Such is all his will, mind, and thought, for which he strives day and night, and never rests a moment, employing all arts, wiles, ways, and means whichever he can invent.

65] If we would be Christians, therefore, we must surely expect and reckon upon having the devil with all his angels and the world as our enemies who will bring every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where the Word of God is preached, accepted, or believed, and produces fruit, there the holy cross [= suffering] cannot be wanting. And let no one think that he shall have peace; but he must risk whatever he has upon earth-possession, honor, house and estate, wife and children, body and life

Luther's Large Catechism, Lord's Prayer, Third Petition, 62-66

NOW, WHAT IS THE DEVIL? 81] Nothing else than what the Scriptures call him, a liar and murderer. A liar, to lead the heart astray from the Word of God, and to blind it, that you cannot feel your distress or come to Christ. A murderer, who cannot bear to see you live one single hour. 82] If you could see how many knives, darts, and arrows are every moment aimed at you, you would be glad to come to the Sacrament [of Holy Communion] as often as possible.

Large Catechism, Sacrament of the Altar 81-82

Warfare in Heaven

Revelation 12

According to Luke, then, the Christ was born to bring peace to earth and through his death and resurrection was about to bring peace in heaven. But what does that “peace” mean? While human warfare on earth includes physical struggles and bloodshed, to the Christian on earth the most horrible battle is a spiritual one fought against forces in the heavenly realms: “*our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers and authorities and cosmic powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*” (Eph. 6:12). While Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection established peace between God in heaven and humanity on earth, that peace is now being contested by evil spiritual powers in heavenly realms who seek to sever the peace between God in heaven and people achieved by Christ. **The warfare in heaven must be interpreted as a spiritual struggle in which the dragon attempts to displace the Christ Child, the victorious Lamb who was slain, in order to establish himself again in the presence of God as the prince of the angels and as the one who has dominion over humanity on earth, and specifically as the one who has the authority to stand before God and accuse people of their sins.** ... This warfare in heaven was “an all-out attempt on the part of Satan to regain his position in the presence of God.”

At the center of this warfare in heaven is Satan’s ability to stand in God’s holy presence and accuse the saints of God (Rev 12:10). It is a war, so to speak, of words—the words with which Satan accused God’s saints of their sins (e.g., Job 1-2; Zech 3:1-5). With these words Satan claimed he, not the Christ, truthfully represented the saints before God’s heavenly throne. This warfare, though of words, is deadly serious, for if Satan’s accusations were validated in the heavenly court, then God’s justice would require him to deny even his own people because of their sin. But for that to happen God would have to deny the claim of his own Son to be the rightful representative and advocate for God’s people. **Christ’s victory has earned for him the right to represent fallen humanity; He is the one “who loves us and set us free from our sins by His blood” (Rev 1:5).** Therefore the accusations of Satan are thrown out of court, and Satan himself is thrown out of heaven (12:8-10). Because of the rightful claim

of Christ to represent God's people with Christ's own sinlessness and righteousness, the very presence of Satan in heaven was now an offense to God and all the heavenly host.

The war in heaven was concluded by "Michael and his angels" against "the dragon" and "his angels," that is, it reached its climax when Michael cast the dragon out of heaven (12:7-9). This war, this casting of Satan out of heaven, took place as a result of Christ's victory and at his ascension and session at the right of God (see 5:1-14). **There was no room for two opposing advocates, each claiming to be the rightful representative of sinful humanity. No longer could God tolerate Satan's presence since his accusations were rendered false by the victorious Lamb, who now returned to heaven.** At the command of God, Michael and all the faithful angels drove out the dragon and his angels. The dragon and his hordes were not to take part in the celebration that ensued among the heavenly hosts—the celebration of Christ's coronation at his ascension. Once the Messiah of God, the Savior and Champion of his people, had defeated the prince of darkness and had taken his seat at the right of God, the dragon was expelled by Michael . . . never again appear before God.

When did this war, this expulsion of the dragon and his evil host, take place? According to 12:5, it happened when the "*Child was snatched up to God and to His throne*," that is, at the ascension of Christ. Apparently before Christ's victory and ascension, the devil could at will stand before God and bring accusations against God's saints. There are two well-known instances of this in the OT. In both Job (1:6-11; 2:1-5) and Zechariah (3:1-7), Satan stands before God's heavenly presence to accuse two of his saints: Job and Joshua the high priest. From the original rebellion to Christ's ascension, Satan could take his place in the council of angels before God in heaven (Job 1:6; 2:1; cf. Dan 7:7-8). **But at Christ's enthronement at the right of God, Satan was forever banished from God's presence and his place in the heavenly court was taken from him.**

This war in heaven in Rev. 12:7 is not the original rebellion of the devil against God, which took place before the fall of Adam and the woman (Gen 3:1). The war and expulsion describe in Revelation 12 happened as a result of Christ's victory and elevation. Not only is Satan judged, because of Christ's triumphant return to his heavenly Father's throne, Satan is now expelled and banished forever from God's presence.

Quote from Revelation, Dr. L. Brighton, OPH, p. 333ff

Note the many comparisons between Christ and Satan In Revelation	Lamb	Dragon
Trinity	Holy Trinity Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Revelation 1:4, 5)	Unholy Trinity Dragon, Beast, the False Prophet (Revelation 12, 13)
Throne	God sits on a throne (Revelation 4:9)	Dragon sits on a throne (Revelation 2:13)
Worship	God is worshipped by the inhabitants of the universe (Revelation 4:10, 5:13)	Dragon is worshipped by the inhabitants of the world (Revelation 13:14)
City	God's city is the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2, 10)	Dragon's city is Babylon (Revelation 14:8, 18:10)
Signs	God seals His people (Revelation 7:4)	Dragon marks his people (Revelation 13:16)
Woman	God's people represented by a pure woman (Revelation 12:1)	Dragon's followers represented by blasphemous harlot (Revelation 17:2)
Wrath	God is full of wrath against his enemies (Revelation 11:18, 19:15)	Dragon is full of wrath against Christ and the church (Revelation 12)
2 Messengers	God has two witnesses who speak His Word (Revelation 11)	Dragon has two messengers who do his evil work (Revelation 16)
Authority	God gives authority to the Son (Revelation 2:27)	Dragon gives authority to the beast (Revelation 13:4)
Time	Christ ministered for 3 ½ years	Dragon persecutes for 3 ½ prophetic years
Wounds	Christ receives a deadly wound from which he was resurrected (Revelation 1:18 / 5:6)	Beast receives a deadly wound from which it was healed (Revelation 13:14).
Miracles	Christ performed many Miracles over Creation	False prophets performs signs and miracles
	Divine	Demonic

Found online years ago; unfortunately source unknown