



(Intro Slide)



Our granddaughter hasn't watched many of the Disney animations. But, she's made clear that the Beast is scary and she'd rather not watch it.

-- As adults we sort of pooh-pooh the fright-factor of these villains.

TR: And as we try to comfort the little ones whose knees are shaking, we say things like . . .

**“Don’t worry.
It’s just a story.”**

READ SLIDE

- Or “It’s just a movie.”
- “It’s not real.”
- “It’s just make-believe.”

TR: We may be wanting to say the same sort of things about the horrific villain presented in the final book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation.



A nightmare inducing image of a seven-headed dragon.

TR: Revelation 12 is a story, but it is a . . .

It is a true “story” . . .

- of a woman, a dragon,
and a child,

READ SLIDE

-- Apocalyptic literature uses powerful images to speak to God’s people during times of great stress . . .

-- . . . like the exilic works of Daniel and Ezekiel.

-- In a similar way, Jesus taught in parables, so that those who had eyes to see would see, but others would not.

-- Revelation 12 uses symbolic descriptions to tell its story . . . but the use of symbols does not make it less true.

TR: Begin with me in 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. ²She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- A great sign . . . cf. John's signs in his gospel = signposts to point us to the reality that Jesus is the Son of God
- The description seems tied to the vision given in Genesis 37:9 to Joseph.
- The woman is considered by some to be Israel.
- Others, who key into the gospel truth of one people of God, think the woman is a symbol of the people of God whose tree's roots are clearly Jewish.
- There certainly is a grand glory to the woman.

TR: Then there is another sign . . .

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red **dragon**, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.
⁴His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Horns and crowns . . . symbols of power and authority.
- The stars of heaven that are cast down are probably angels who followed the dragon in his rebellion against God.

TR: This horrific dragon . . .

And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. ⁵She 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,

ESV

READ SLIDE

- The story is a true story . . . about a woman, a dragon, and a child
- This child is the Messiah, the anointed One who is to rule the nations.
- With a rod of iron . . . as mentioned in the letter to Thyatira (2:27)
- . . . and first in Psalm 2.
- Herod was the earthly puppet of the dragon, seeking to kill the baby Jesus, even as he ordered the death of the children under 2.
- But, God protected the Messiah as a child and ultimately “caught Him up” through the resurrection and ascension.

TR: Verse 6 then concludes this section . . .

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.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Tied as one sentence, it seems chronological to me . . . the people of God fled into the wilderness sometime after the resurrection and ascension of Messiah.
- Is this symbolic for the church the entire time between the ascension and Christ's second coming.
- Or is the a telescoping of events, with the reference to 1,260 (3 ½ years) pulling us forward to the end of history just prior to the return of Jesus?
- We will always have some questions that we just have to have theories about, not dogmatic dictums.

TR: But, these questions don't mean that the story isn't a

TRUE story. It is a true story of . . .

It is a true “story” . . .

- of a woman, a dragon,
and a child,
- of a war fought in heaven,

READ SLIDE

- Here we move to the second section of Revelation 12
- We move from the overview of the story, the executive summary, as it were . . .
- . . . to a zoom in to some necessary specifics.

**TR: It is a true story of a war fought in heaven . . . look at verse
7**

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Isn't it interesting that we never see God directly doing battle with the dragon, with Satan?
- The Bible does NOT present some sort of dualism. Satan isn't the dark side equivalent of God . . . he is only a created being.
- He is omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. Only God is.
- So, it is other created beings that battle this created being that rebelled against God and took a third of the angelic beings with him.

TR: Verse 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.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- What a collection of titles and descriptions of the dragon.
-- It seems this is the defeat of Satan when he was thrown out of heaven, certainly before the time the Serpent appeared in the Garden of Eden to tempt Eve.

TR: This initial defeat is then crunched together like compacting a telescope in verse 10 . . .

Revelation 12:10 p. 1136

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."

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Satan tempts us to sin and then accuses us for the sin we commit.

-- The authority of God's Christ was manifest in the cross and resurrection . . . remembering back to chapters 4 and 5 . . . and the conquering done by the Lion-Lamb who was slain.

TR: Satan's defeats pile up even more in verse 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.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

- The “they” are the “brothers” who are accused by Satan.**
- They conquer by the blood and the word of their testimony.**
- They witness to the truth of their testimony, by being willing to die for it.**

TR: This war, fought in heaven, is bitter sweet, as verse 12 says . . .

“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!”

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Those in heaven rejoice in the victory of the war fought in heaven.
- Those on earth will have to deal with the devil who has been thrown down . . .
- . . . and he comes in great wrath.
- He knows his time is short and his hatred of God and all those created in the image of God . . .
- . . . and even more so for those who have been recreated in the image of God’s Son . . .
- . . . intensifies his rage.
- EX: Nazi in Berlin as the Allied forces were coming in, said to my dad re: his intent to kill him.

TR: This is a story . . . but not just a story. It is a true story of . . .

It is a true “story” . . .

- of a woman, a dragon,
and a child,
- of a war fought in heaven,
- of a war fought on earth.

READ SLIDE

-- Here we come to the second “zoom in” that gives us more details that the overview of the first 6 verses covered.

-- This section covers verse 13-17

TR: Look at the Word . . .

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. ¹⁴But 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.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- The war on the earth is boiled down to the pursuit of the people of God by the dragon.
- God's sovereignty protects His church . . .
- The people of God are cared for, similar to what God said to Israel in Exodus 19:4 . . . "I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself."
- Similar thoughts in Deuteronomy 32:9-13 where God's care for His people is . . . "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions."
- Or, the promise of Isaiah 40:30, "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.”

-- Again we see the mention of 3 ½ years, this time using the language of Daniel the prophet.

TR: The war fought on earth is real . . .

Revelation 12:15-16 p. 1136

The serpent poured water like a river **out of his mouth** after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. ¹⁶But 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.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- The serpent, the dragon, pours out attacks.
- God remains sovereign . . . nothing can touch the people of God without his permission.

TR: It is not a one round fight either, look to verse 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

READ SLIDE

- That last sentence will look at next week.
- The rage we saw in verse 12 is only intensified.
- Who are the offspring of this woman, part of the people of God?
- Those who keep the commandments and hold the testimony.
- Those who hold the testimony = about God's justly justifying the unjust . . . righteously making righteous the unrighteous through faith in Jesus.
- Those who do that will also be folks who show the testimony NOT only in word, but ALSO IN DEED . . . in obedience.

-- Jesus said that if we love Him we will obey Him.

TR: The story of Revelation 12 is a story . . .

It is a true “story” . . .

- of a woman, a dragon,
and a child,
- of a war fought in heaven,
- of a war fought on earth.

READ SLIDE

TR: But it is not JUST a story.



If your imagination is half as potent as mine, this is way scarier . . . because it is true.

TR: And the comfort we seek will not come because we say, “Don’t worry, it’s just a story.”

It is not “just” a story, but a . . .

22

READ SLIDE

- And it is not something we can just push to the side and ignore.
- We hurt ourselves when we ignore any part of God’s Word.

TR: As John says at the end of Revelation . . .

Revelation 22:18-19

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- We must never allow ourselves to read God's Word and say

...

-- ... that was cute, interesting, weird, scary, or whatever ...

-- ... without asking what is God calling us all to ... and specifically calling me to THIS WEEK?

TR: Revelation 12 is ...

It is not “just” a story, but a . . .

- call to vigilance

READ SLIDE

TR: Too many Christians are like this guy . . . who dozed off because “it was JUST a story. . .”



**. . . that someone was going to rob the bank.
-- We are called to vigilance, not to sleeping at our posts.**

TR: Specifically, what does this look like?

Vigilance is alert to the truth that:

26

READ SLIDE

TR: We must be alert, reading all of Revelation 12 and focusing on the reality of verse 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

READ SLIDE

TR: We must be alert to the truth that . . .

Vigilance is alert to the truth that:

28

- **we are at war!**

READ SLIDE

-- We should have been at war against the abuse of women . . . but it has taken a flood of MeToo accusations to alert us.

-- We should have had legislation to protect youth athletes . . . but it has taken an abusive doctor being sentenced to several lifetimes in prison to alert us.

-- We should have been vigilant to the disenfranchised people, listening to the voices in their heads . . . but it has taken another school massacre to alert us.

-- We dare not listen to the false prophets who say, even as they did 600 years before Jesus, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

TR: We are at war. And who are we at war against?

“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!”

ESV

READ SLIDE (beginning with “the devil . . .”)

TR: In great wrath, the devil . . .

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

...“the dragon became furious” and went off to make war.

TR: Vigilance is being alert to the truth that . . .

Vigilance is alert to the truth that:

31

- **we are at war!**
- **Satan is our enraged enemy, who is pursuing us!**

READ SLIDE

-- As Peter tells us, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." – (1 Peter 5:8)

-- Cf. If we knew there was a lion outside prowling for us . . . we would walk to our cars differently!

-- Cf. protecting our children from the enemy . . . thinking home-schooling is all it will take . . . but that would suggest that the enemy is able to be defeated by education. I'm not against any form of schooling, with godly parents prayerfully choosing what is best for each child. But, the answer is far different than "hide our kids under the bed."

-- Cf. Kathy's challenge to a woman she is mentoring . . . not just "so what?," BUT, "so what for me this week."

TR: Revelation 12 is not just a story, it is a call . . .

It is not "just" a story, but a . . .

- call to vigilance
- call to readiness

. . . to vigilance, not sleeping at our posts AND it is a call to readiness.

TR: Too many professing followers of Jesus read Jesus' revelation to John and think the answer is to . . .



. . . hide under our beds.

-- I have no idea where this image comes from, but it does capture the fear that controls so many of us.

TR: Instead of fear and hiding under our beds we need to . . .

Readiness is “geared up” with:

34

- . . . heed the call to readiness and get GEARED UP.**
- I’m not talking prepper talk, of gearing up with guns and ammo.**
- I’m talking about how Revelation 12 should stir us to GEAR UP with five spiritual weapons.**

TR: First, we look back to verse 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.”

ESV

“They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb”

TR: If we heed this call to readiness, we will gear up with . . .

Readiness is “geared up” with:

- **Salvation - thru the blood of Jesus**

READ SLIDE

- We are not “mistakers who need a life coach” but “sinners who need a savior.” (Joby Martin in “Act Like Men”)
- If we have never trusted Christ for salvation, we are in a world of hurt.
- Satan still hates us because we are made in the image of the God, Whom he hates.
- But, we have no protection, no promises, no salvation.
- EX: Luis Palau – death of neighbor vs. death of his dad (see separate paper)
- Are you geared up with salvation?

TR: What does verse 19 remind us to gear up with?

Revelation 12:10 p. 1136

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."

ESV

"the accuser of our brother has been thrown down"

TR: If we are to be the conquerors God wants us to be, we must gear up with . . .

Readiness is “geared up” with:

- **Salvation - thru the blood of Jesus**
- **Hope – Satan has been defeated**

READ SLIDE

-- As Paul says, “(Jesus) disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”
(Col. 2:15)

-- CF the hope of post D-Day but pre V-Day in WWII.

TR: Our pre-combat checklist is added to in verse 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.

ESV

“And the great dragon . . . Satan, the deceiver of the whole world”

TR: We also must gear up with the . . .

Readiness is “geared up” with:

- **Salvation - thru the blood of Jesus**
- **Hope – Satan has been defeated**
- **Truth – Satan is a deceiver**

READ SLIDE

-- Neal Anderson has reminded us in his books, *Victory over the Darkness* and *The Bondage Breaker*, that we are having **TRUTH ENCOUNTERS** more than **POWER ENCOUNTERS**.

-- Satan is not all powerful. He is not God's equal in any way.

-- His chief weapon has always been deception.

-- From his lies to Eve in the Garden, to his desert attempts to lure Christ away from trust in the Father . . . he is the father of lies.

TR: Verse 17 prods us on further . . .

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

READ SLIDE (highlighted)

-- we are offspring of the woman, part of the people of God, if we keep the commandments of God.

TR: The Devil's lies often bounce from tempting us to sin to accusing us when we have sinned.

Readiness is “geared up” with:

- **Salvation - thru the blood of Jesus**
- **Hope – Satan has been defeated**
- **Truth – Satan is a deceiver**
- **Obedience – righteous living**

The geared up Christian understands that we must be clothed in righteousness.

-- The righteousness that comes through the blood of Jesus (our first piece of gear) . . .

-- . . . AND that works itself out in our righteous living, obedient to God’s commandments.

-- EX: College student asked about “legalism.” [legalism] – earn some or all of our righteousness through obedience.

-- BUT, contrast is “license.” [license] – it doesn’t matter what I do because I’m saved.

-- What we need is a humility before the Word of God that receives liberty without erring to either extreme.

TR: This obedience is what Paul talks about at the end of Romans . . .

Romans 16:19-20

For your **obedience** is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. **²⁰The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- We want to be among those mentioned in the seven letters of Revelation 2-3, "the one who conquers"
- Satan was thrown down before human history began, he was thrown down at the cross and resurrection, he will be thrown down into the lake of fire when final judgment comes.

TR: AND, he is conquered when we gear up . . .

Readiness is “geared up” with:

- **Salvation - thru the blood of Jesus**
- **Hope – Satan has been defeated**
- **Truth – Satan is a deceiver**
- **Obedience – righteous living**

READ SLIDE (review)

TR: One last piece of gear that I found in this chapter, look at verses 11 and 17

“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.”

ESV

“by the word of their testimony”

TR: and then in verse 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

who “hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

TR: Revelation 12’s true story about a woman, a dragon, and a child . . . of war in heaven and on earth . . . is a call for us to be ready to be . . .

Readiness is “geared up” with:

- **Salvation - thru the blood of Jesus**
- **Hope – Satan has been defeated**
- **Truth – Satan is a deceiver**
- **Obedience – righteous living**
- **Faithful Witness – the testimony of Jesus**

. . . faithful witnesses.

-- This is not just our story, our testimony that tells about how much we've changed,

-- BUT, rather the story of Jesus.

-- CF. woman in our church who now has a neighbor, relative, and a co-worker all asking her to bring their prayer requests to her small group. She is being faithful to tell what Jesus has done on the cross, and what He has done for her.

-- Some of us are brand new to the faith and the Bible. Some have been under the Word for a long time. To those who fall in that second group, do you see any parallels between this list of how readiness is geared up and another passage that tells us to get geared up?

TR: I'm thinking of the passage represented by this challenge

coin



The helmet of salvation -

- the shield of faith – that extinguishes the fiery darts and sustains our hope**
- the belt of truth – to battle against Satan’s deceptions**
- the breastplate of righteousness . . . Christ’s righteousness worked out into our daily lives**
- the sandals of the gospel of peace, so we can take the good news out to others as faithful witnesses.**

TR: What is Revelation 12’s point for us today? Things we be very hard those last 3 ½ years, but the conquerors then will win the same way we win today . . .

Ephesians 6:11-12

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but **against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Revelation 12 is a story . . . a true story . . . but . . .

It is not “just” a story, but a . . .

- call to vigilance
Are we ALERT TO THE TRUTH?
- call to readiness
Are we GEARED UP?

READ SLIDE

-- Are we **ALERT** or **SLEEPING AT OUR POSTS**?

-- We are at war and an enraged Satan is pursuing us toward evil ends.

-- Are we **GEARED UP** or **HIDING UNDER OUR BEDS**?

-- Are we putting on the whole armor of God every day in the dressing room of prayer.

-- Gentlemen, I speak directly to you . . . you would die for your wife and children . . . but will you pray for them.

-- There will be great prayer rallies after a shooting, but will the prayer meetings have anyone attending three weeks later?

-- It is scary, but it is not **JUST** a story, it is a call to vigilance and

readiness . . . to those who would be conquerors.