

A WOMAN, A DRAGON, AND A CHILD

Christmas Letters: Revelation 12:1-17

December 12, 2021

*They overcame 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.*

Revelation 12:11

Reading Revelation

1. Jesus wins!
2. The church can live victoriously during these three and half years (or 42 months or 1260 days)
3. Apocalyptic interprets apocalyptic

You won't know the cast without a program

A great and wondrous 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 his heads. ⁴ His 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 he might devour her child the moment it 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

Revelation 12:1-5 (with another allusion to Psalm 2)

1. The woman: _____
(Genesis 37:9; Isaiah 54; Galatians 4:26; not Mary of the woman of Revelation 17)
2. The dragon: _____
(Revelation 17 and 20; Daniel 7:7-14; see Revelation 19:11-16)
3. The child: _____
(Genesis 3:15; Psalm 2 and Revelation 2:27, 19:15; Galatians 4:4; and our Philippians 2 text)

What's happening in the heavenlies

⁷ And there was war 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.

Revelation 12:7-9 (see also Daniel 10:13, 12:1; Ezekiel 28; and in Ephesians 1:18-23. 6:10-13)

1. This is the story behind Genesis 3 from which we still experience the fallout
2. Satan's names are Adversary and Accuser – he really does hate those who bear the Jesus testimony

The story of the church: a song in heaven and dragon on earth

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 Christ.*

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

¹¹ *They overcame 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.”

¹³ *When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. ¹⁵ Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.*

Revelation 12:10-17

1. The rejoicers in heaven were all warriors on earth (see Spurgeon's wonderful sermon!)
2. The river counterfeits Revelation 22, it is the “culture of death”
3. We are the offspring who hold to testimony of Jesus (Revelation 6:9, 11:7, 20:4)

How we overcome

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 Christ.*

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

¹¹ They overcame 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.

Revelation 12:10-11 (for John’s thinking about overcoming see John 16:33; 1 John 2:13-14, 5:4-5)

⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:7 (see 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:4-5, 3:11-13, 3:21 for the other “overcomes”)

1. By the blood of the Lamb (it takes away our sin THEN answers Satan’s accusations!)

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Romans 8:33-34

2. By out empowered testimony (or witness, *marturia* from *martus*, see Acts 1:8 and more passages!)

¹⁰ Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 John 5

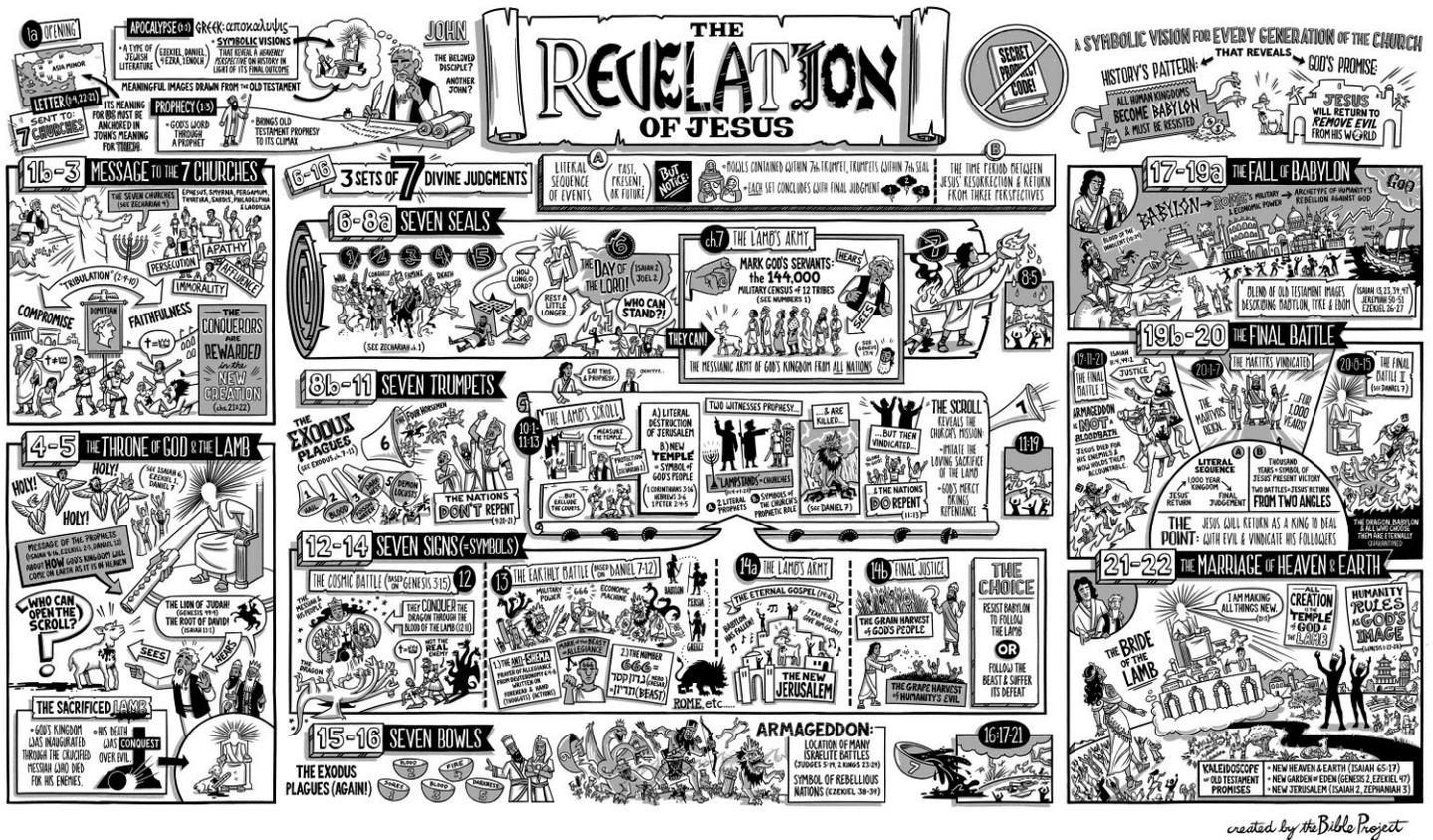
3. By a new perspective on life and death

⁸ “To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. ⁹ I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Revelation 2:8-11



Resources for the Revelation 12

Be sure to check the [Bible Project's poster](#) on Revelation.

[Bible.org](#) has a long list of resources including lessons by Stedman, Deffinbaugh, MacArthur and more.

Very Poythress' very good introduction to Revelation, "The Return of the King", at <https://frame-poythress.org/ebooks/the-returning-king/>

Horatio Bonar's "The Heavenly Song of Victory" at <https://gracegems.org/19/r36.htm>

Kim Riddlebarger has a very short introduction at <https://www.kimriddlebarger.com/the-riddleblog/the-book-of-revelation-a-surprisingly-practical-book> and sermons at <http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/downloadable-sermons-on-the-bo/>

I especially liked the Peter O'Brien's NIGTC commentary on this passage (Eerdmans, 1991).

Four favorite commentaries on Revelation (and three authors whom I've met!) are Eugene Peterson's *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination* (HarperCollins, 1988), Darrell Johnson's *Discipleship on the Edge* (Regent College Publishing, 2004), Bob Mounce's *The Book of Revelation* in the New International Commentary series (Eerdmans, 1977), and the older William Hendricksen's *More Than Conquerors* (Baker, 1939 and 1967).

Spurgeon has a wonderful sermon on Revelation 12 at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/how-they-conquered-the-dragon/#flipbook/>