

Revelation 12-14

Read Central Focus

Sing the Hymn

Prayer (together aloud)

Read the Introduction from LifeLight

The Woman and the Dragon

12 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. ³And 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. 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, ⁶and 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.

Satan Thrown Down to Earth

⁷Now 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. ⁹And 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. ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹And 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. ¹²Therefore, 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!”

¹³And 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. ¹⁵The 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. ¹⁷Then 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.

1. The Dragan is Satan (VERSE 9)
2. Chapters 12-14 is a set of Seven Visions
3. Verse 1: Who is the woman? Answer: The Holy Church, the Bride of Christ. A popular answer in Roman Catholicism is Mary.
4. The reason why this answer might seem to work is because the “child” – VERSE 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” – is Jesus Christ.
5. Yet, the “crown of twelve stars” in VERSE 1 reminds us of the significance of the number 12. 12 is the number for the people of God.
6. In other words, 12 is the number for The Holy Church.
7. Jesus Christ was born out of the Holy Church descended from Abraham.
8. Consider Matthew’s genealogy (chapter 1).
9. As for Satan’s imagery: 7 heads and 10 horns and 7 diadems/crowns. Recall that 7 and 10 relate to the idea of complete and perfection. In this case, however, the completeness and perfection is not good, but evil. By associating himself with these numbers, Satan is replicating Christ. He tries to look like Christ. He has great knowledge and great power...his crowns present his false presentation that he is “god”.
10. Consider Ezekiel 28.
11. Satan of course went after Jesus. But Satan could not overcome Christ (think of the 40 days in the wilderness and the Saving Cross itself). Christ was victorious, so “was caught up to God and to his throne” (verse 5). He ascended into heaven.
12. In the meantime, “the woman” (the HOLY CHURCH) is still here in “the wilderness”...we are still away from HOME (Heaven). The time of our collective exile is 1,260 days (half of God’s 7 which represents a time of

- persecution). But, during our time in the wilderness, God prepares a place for us to nourish us. Where is that?
13. The war in heaven is a spectacular scene. Michael is identified in Scripture as the archangel. The holy angels do God's bidding. They are powerful and they fight for us. They minister to us (Hebrews 1:14). We do not pray to them. We thank God for them.
 14. But how did Michael and the good angels defeat Satan and his "angels" (demons/fallen angels)? Answer: The same way all of us know the victory over Satan, VERSE 11: "And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..."
 15. Satan does not give up. VERSE 12. He is here on earth. He pursues us, Christ's Church.
 16. VERSE 14, but we are given "two wings of the great eagle so that [we] might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where [we] are nourished" for our half 7 time. This description of God's deliverance was used to describe God saving Israel from Egypt (Exodus 19:4).
 17. God's elect remain protected (you have the full armor of God, Eph. 6).
 18. VERSE 15: Satan sends out a flood physical and spiritual attacks of all kinds in the world, but God Himself protects us from Satan's flood (VERSE 16).
 19. VERSE 17: Satan goes after individual offspring (Christians). How is the offspring of God described? "those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus." He wants to destroy us one-by-one.
 20. "And he stood on the sand of the sea" ...sets the stage for the next vision.

The First Beast

13 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. ²And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. ⁴And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" ⁵And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is,

those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive,
to captivity he goes;
if anyone is to be slain with the sword,
with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

1. The First Beast associated with “the sea” (verse 1) is the Anti-Christian World Powers.
2. Tumultuous sea = symbolizing the tumultuous world.
3. These are forces outside the Church which strike against the Church.
4. The 1st Beast is representative of worldly, external attacks against the Church.
5. Like the dragon, the 1st Beast has ten horns, seven heads, and ten diadems. This beast is very powerful. At the time of John’s writing, it would have been easy for the 1st century Christian to think of the power and corruption of the Roman Empire. For us in the 21st century, do we have any problem seeing evil in the systems of the world against God and His Church?
6. VERSE 3: Manifestations of the beast in evil empires include times when those evil empires are defeated, but what happens? In the world, another one rises up to replace the last one.
7. This replication of power will continue until the coming of Christ.
8. As Christ with all authority has given His commission to us, His Church; the devil has given his commission to the world powers to blaspheme God and to seek to persecute the Holy Church.
9. VERSE 4: The people of the world are so impressed by the world powers, that they quickly choose the world over Jesus Christ.
10. VERSE 7: Not conquer in the sense of taking eternal life, but earthly persecution which many cases, takes away our physical life (think of the martyrs).
11. VERSE 8: Those who go along with the world powers/the first beast are NOT “in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.” (VERSE 9)

12. VERSE 10: God is giving confidence to His people. “Don’t worry, because I am in control.” Our eternal election is sure regardless of how we might be persecuted.

The Second Beast

¹¹ Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³ It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴ and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. ¹⁶ Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. ¹⁸ This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

1. The second beast is also from Satan.
2. It comes “out of the earth.”
3. This one is deceptive, but with the same goal to attack the Church, God’s people, and the Gospel of Christ.
4. This is anti-Christian propaganda which in many cases claims to be the church and claims to speak for God.
5. This is the religious version of Satan’s attack.
6. Recall how the devil and his servants present themselves: 2 Corinthians 11:14:

¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

7. VERSE 11: “like a lamb” = false Christ
8. His words are really the words of the devil. How can you tell the difference? Know the Word of Christ!

9. VERSE 13: It performs false signs/false miracles.
10. VERSE 14: People – described as “who dwell on earth” – are deceived to trust this beast. Your dwelling is not earth, but heaven. You are not these people. Read Matthew 24:24.
11. VERSE 15: Those who do not follow will be persecuted and even martyred.
12. VERSE 16: The beast marks those who follow Satan both “on the right hand” or “the forehead” = this is a mockery of God’s people also marked on their hands and foreheads (think baptism and the life that follows). But here, the marks of the beast is 666 (VERSE 18).
13. 6 is the number of man who fell. Short of perfection. 777 would express complete perfection, 666 expresses complete fallenness. It is the number of the anti-Trinity. Hebrew and Greek characters served both as letters and numbers, “Nero Caesar” transliterated into Hebrew totals 666. Other names have been proposed.

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

The Messages of the Three Angels

⁶Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

⁸ Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”

⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

¹² Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

1. VERSE 1: 144,000 is the vision of god’s people (12 x 12 x 1000). God’s Name was put on your forehead.
2. VERSE 5: “They are blameless” = so in Christ you are.
3. Please read Ephesians 5:27 and Jude 24.
4. VERSE 2: the voice of Christ (similar to 1:15 and 4:5)
5. VERSE 3: “a new song” SEE Psalm 98:1; 144:9; 149:1.
6. It can only be sung by God’s people!
7. The scene shifts back to earth at VERSE 6
8. First Angel: The world is called to REPENT.
9. Second Angel: Announces that the world power is fallen.
10. Third Angel: A great warning to those who would follow the beast.
11. VERSE 12: “endurance” Note two qualities.
12. VERSE 13: Beautiful.

The Harvest of the Earth

¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.” ¹⁶ So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

¹⁷ Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority

over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

1. The Final Harvest
2. See Isaiah 63:3, Lamentations 1:15, Joel 3:13.
3. 1600 is 4 (the world) x 4 x 10 x 10 = the finality of God's judgement.
4. This measurement is about the size of Palestine.