



***How are we at spiritual war?*** Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Revelation 12 prepares us for the first portion of morning public worship on the previous Lord's Day. In these seventeen verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that a defeated devil has made war on every Christian, and we are to wage and win that war by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of His testimony.

## Tuesday, February 8, 2022 ▫ Revelation 12

Questions from the Scripture text: What kind of sign appeared in heaven (v1)? What was the sign? What does this woman do in v2? What appears in v3? What does he do in v4a? What does he do in v4b? What does the woman do in v5a? What happens to Him (v5b)? Where does the woman go in v6? Who prepared the place for her? For how long is she fed there? What happens in heaven in v7? What was the outcome (v8)? What/who was the dragon (v9)? What happened to him? What does John hear in v10? What four things does the voice say has come? Why—what has happened to whom? What do the brethren do in v11? By what two means? What do they not do? Who should rejoice (v12)? But what about the earth and the sea? Why? What did the dragon do on earth (v13)? What was she given (v14)? To do what? For how long? From what? What did the serpent do (v15)? But what helped her (v16)? How? How did the dragon take this (v17)? What did he go to do? Against whom? Who are her offspring?

Next week's Call to Worship, Prayer for Help, and first song all come from Revelation 12 so that we will see that we are singing God's thoughts after Him with *Am I Soldier of the Cross*.

In this chapter war in heaven concludes (v7) unto the beginning (refreshing?) of a war on earth (v17). By the end of the chapter we realize that this latter war is one that rather specifically involves us.

At first, we might think that the woman in v1 is Eve. Sun, moon, and stars imply the creation (cf. Gen 1:16), and she was there on day six. The crying out in labor and in pain to give birth also reminds us of her curse (cf. Gen 3:16). But the number 12 is significant and points us forward to the tribes of Israel. There's just one problem with that; they were born not of one mother but of four! Then we think it might be Mary, because the woman actually bears the male Child Who is obviously Christ (v5). But there is no indication in Scripture of a persecution specifically targeting her.

Rather, the woman is the church, who is persecuted (and nourished!) for "42 months" (v6, 14). This is 3.5 years, or ½ of completion. This seems to be an indication that half of history occurs after the ascension of Christ, but there is much disagreement about this number, and no one knows the timing of His return. What we do know is that since the woman is the church, that we are among "the rest of her offspring."

It means that there is only one woman, one church, throughout the ages—not separate "Old Testament" and "New Testament" churches, but one church under various administrations. It means that the serpent of old (v9, cf. Gen 3:1) who tempted Eve in the garden is still attacking the woman and her offspring. It means that the role of Eve (cf. Gen 3:15) and of Mary is still, generally speaking, the role of Christian women (cf. 1Tim 2:15), but especially the role of the church. *The church has offspring*—not just covenant children, but all who join the family business, the family military campaign: keeping the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (v17).

You see, the war in heaven is over (v8), with the happy result that the accuser has been replaced by the Advocate (v10). And now there is war on earth (v17). Our weapons are the blood of Lamb which declares us forgiven (v11a), and the word of our testimony in which we witness to Christ as our God (v11b).

Are you fighting to keep God's commandments and testify to Jesus Christ (v17)? Do you love this more than your life (v11c)? There are words that describe soldiers who are on the battlefield but not engaged in the battle. Words like traitor. Or casualty.

In what ways are you battling to keep God's commandments and live as subjects of Christ? By what means can we hope to succeed in that battle? Why isn't death defeat in that battle?

*Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You for Your own victory, and we thank You for casting down our accuser and taking Your seat upon the throne as our Advocate. Forgive us for when we forget that we are at war, caring little to keep Your commandments or live as Your subjects. Grant that Your Spirit would bring us to our senses so that we can reengage in the battle. And make us to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the testimony of Jesus Christ, in whose Name we ask it, AMEN!!*

**Suggested songs: ARP1 "How Blessed the Man" or TPH539 "Am I a Soldier of the Cross"**

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

Revelation 12. These are God's words now.

A great sign appeared in heaven. A woman clothed with the sun with the moon under her feet and on her head, a garland of 12 stars and being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. Another sign appeared in heaven. Behold a great fiery red Dragon, having seven heads and 10 horns and seven items on his heads, his tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and through them to the earth on the Dragons, stood before the woman, who is ready to give birth to devour her child.

As soon as it was born, She bore a male child who was to rule all nations for the rod of iron and her child was caught up to God and his throne than the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there 1,200 and 60 days and war broke out in heaven.

Michael. And his angels fought with the dragon on the dragon and his angels fought. But they did not prevail nor was a place found for them in heaven, any longer. So, the great dragon was cast out to the serpent of old cold to the devil and Satan The deceives, the whole world.

He was cast to the earth and as angels were cast out with him, Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now, Salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before, our God day, and night has been cast down.

And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony and they did not love their lives to the death, Therefore rejoice. So heavens and you who dwell in them. Whoa, to the inhabitants of the earth and see for the devil has come down to you having great wraths because he knows that he has a short time.

Now, when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child, the woman was given two wings of a great eagle. That she might fly into the wilderness to her place where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the presence of the serpent.

So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman that you might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the launch the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood, which the dragon and speed out of his mouth when the dragon was enraged with a woman and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, to keep the commandments of God and have the testimony Jesus Christ.

So, for the reading of God's inspired and inerrant work, the tractor starts out with a sign, a woman. And the woman at Fierce first appears as if it might be Eve, She was. Of course, the first woman God created the man and then he created the woman from the man and at the creation, you have sun and moon and stars greater light to cover the day less relied to cover the night.

Any made this tarsal. So and so this Sunman and stars language crowning. The woman as it were who was really the crown of creation. Man was the crown of creation the image of God but woman was the crown of man, a man was not good. The only thing that wasn't good.

And the old first week of creation was a man by himself until God made the one. However, the 12 stars takes us a little bit forward because we know the number 12, I think. Oh, this must be the mother of the 12 tribes of Israel. Except for there's a problem or maybe four problems there, which is the 12 tribes of Israel.

Didn't have one mother. They had four Then we might think. Oh well maybe it's Mary She does. After all give birth to the male child, is to rule the nations of the earth with an iron rod. The begotten son of Psalm 2. Who shatters the kingdoms this world in the Kings of this world?

And yet after he is caught up to heaven Then for a time and times and half a time or 1260 days, Both of which a time one and times, two more three and a half. A time is three and a half years. 1260 days is 42 times 30, which is again 42 months or roughly three and a half years.

Although we know 29 and 31 and 28 and all that stuff, but they had lunar months. So, three and a half years and three and a half, of course, is half seven. So there's an image here of the completeness of time. There's the time before the child is born and is caught up to heaven.

And then there's the child The time after the child is born and caught up to heaven and those two things. But together make the fullness of God's plan of redemption. Now, this doesn't mean necessarily that there's exactly the same amount of time after the ascension of Jesus as there was before the ascension of Jesus here you can't quite count like 4,030 years from the creation until Jesus is mentioned.

And then say well, 4,030 minus 34 so the world is going to end in 39.96 AD. Exactly. Nobody knows the day or the hour and yet God is showing the ascension of his son, is the thing that splits time in two. And yet, even after Jesus is enthroned, the devil is enraged.

We see given to us as at least a word picture, we don't know enough about what happens among angels except for that. Satan as is described here that dragon the ancient serpent, which means we are not to read serpent in Genesis 3 as if the devil possessed a snake.

But that he is called a serpent and that he wasn't indeed more glorious through any of the earthly creatures which actually kind of makes sense of how unfallen intelligent Eve. Would listen to him because he appears as a glorious one. And yet, although he appeared to her as a glorious one, he was in his character in his nature, a serpent and he had, he had taken down as it were a third of the stars of having a third of the angels verse 4.

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and through 10 them to the earth. So the demons that afflict people on the earth are fallen angels and this gives us good reason to call out to God and ask for the help of the spirit ask that we would be given wisdom and discernment that we would not be tempted or deceived by the devil.

You might think or we might in our pride. God, spare us from such fleshliness. Think that we are not susceptible to the deceptions of the devil, but let us remember that. A third of the Holy angels fell and let us not think that we apart from God's merciful preserving and protecting us.

What not? Also fall, It's important for us to have that humility and have that wisdom because we're at war Now, there are two ways for you to end up at war. Someone else makes war on you. Or you make war upon them. And if someone has made war upon you, You cannot say, well, I would like to not be at war and so I just won't battle.

I like to have peace and enjoyment. That doesn't work for anyone, except Switzerland, and they have the Alps. But if someone is at war with you, you don't try to make nice with them or ignore them. Now, there was war in heaven. Jesus took his seat on the throne And when Jesus took his seat on the throne war broke out in heaven and Michael and his angels fall with the dragon.

And we can take as the implication that this was under the command of Jesus. The captain of the army of Yahweh of Hosts took his seat and suddenly the chief General among the angels went to war. Do you think he did? So of his own accord or do you think the command came from the throne?

Jesus goes on the offensive as it were Satan thought that he had found the more opportune time you remember. He had left Jesus after the temptation for a more opportune time and then when do we see him? Take the more opportune time, He enters Judas and he attacks Jesus at the cross and he seems to win Jesus dies.

But he rises again the third day and he ascends into heaven and he sits on the throne and now the real battle begins. And so Michael and his angels battle against the dragon, the devil, and the devil and his angels are cast to earth, which is wonderful because there's no more of like what we see in Job, where the devil is allowed to be among the sons of God, with God, in heaven, making accusation against us.

And as this, this passage says he was making that accusation day and night. Kent can't can't stop. Accusing us. That's his, that's his character and that's his nature. But there's no room for the accuser in heaven anymore, because the advocate Now sits on the throne of heaven. Remember in Romans 8, who will bring a charge against God's elected as God in justifies, who will condemn us?

It's Jesus, who died and rose again. And, and sits at the right hand to send it into heaven. He intercedes for us and so there's no there's not even accusation against us at all in heaven anymore. It's not permitted, not just not, listen to not permitted, not possible for God's elect for a wonderful reminder.

When certain comes and accuses you in your heart. And your mind, you say you can say you shut up devil, You're not allowed to make those accusations in heaven and I will listen to those accusations on earth. But I will listen to the rebukes of God, the Holy Spirit.

And so anything that is accurate about you is you ask God for wisdom and His words to be unto you a true and clear mirror so that you can know not only God clearly by His Word. But yourself clearly you accept us from the Holy Spirit but you never need to listen to an accusing voice.

The kind of voice that says you're hopeless or your guilty. If you believe in Jesus, there is no condemnation against you. You are not guilty. If you believe in Jesus, you are not hopeless. Even if your experience makes you cry out, who will save me from the body of this death, the Bible teaches you, and you must believe God over yourself.

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ. Our Lord. So don't listen to the accuser. If he's not allowed

to speak in heaven, You shut them up on her of sin. The scripture says flea temptation of the devil. Scripture says, resist the devil and he will flee from. You is actually afraid Now of Christians who have their Christ on the throne and who trust in Him and cling to him.

Now, we know he's enraged. He couldn't, he couldn't ultimately succeed about Jesus, against Jesus, He couldn't ultimately succeed against the establishing of the church. And notice the woman is one woman all the way through. There's not like an Old Testament church. Who's one woman and a New Testament church is a different woman.

God has one church throughout the ages Anyone who teaches differently is making up nonsense as infected the teaching of various churches. And you need not believe such a thing. He couldn't, he couldn't do anything against Jesus. He couldn't do anything against the establishing of the church. Why? Because Jesus says, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it, the gates of hell.

Where the decisions and Council of Hell are taken, the gate of a city, was the place where the governors of the city made their plans and decided their decisions, gave their commands. Hell. Can't do anything to stop the church so he couldn't do anything about the child. He couldn't do anything about the woman.

So what is he knew? Now, verse 17, the dragon was enraged with a woman and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring. My dear children, it actually gives me great joy to look around this table and see some of the offspring of the woman that there is such a thing.

As covenant children, the offspring of the church. Many of you almost all of you here at this table, have professed faith in Jesus Christ. But whether you have yet or not, you are the offspring of the woman and the devil is at war with you. That would be very foolish if you're on the battlefield and the enemy was making war with you, and you decided to play video games instead or sit down and compose a poem.

No, and you're in battle. What you need to be doing is fighting, you have everything. You need your general, and sitting on the throne of heaven. He's filled you with his spirit. You know, that just as the earth opened up to swallow, the water from emerging you Nobody wants to be immersed.

That just is the earth opens up to swallow the water in this passage. God's providence is giving you every advantage will not let the devil ultimately harm. You will only let him do. But ever is ultimately for your good. So that you can be like Joseph with everything, whoever, and whatever, even the devil himself meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

I am not in the place of God, but praise God. He is in the place of God and he's given himself in Jesus Christ for me. He's my Savior and he's my champion and so you can fight that battle and you can overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of your testimony.

Right. That's how those who have already finished their fight verse 11, that's how they overcame. Well, this doesn't mean that they didn't get executed, right? Because it says, they loved not their lives, even unto death, which means overcoming by the blood of the lamb, and overcoming by the word of the type of your testimony about him that he is looking of kings and Lord of lords, and that he has died for sinners.

And this the Christ overcoming does not mean you don't get killed. It means that getting killed doesn't defeat you so you must not love your life even unto death, You must be willing to die because you know that death has lost its sting in. The grave has no victory over you because Jesus has victory over the grave.

And so with all that teaching from Revelation 12 behind us, what we're left with is this we're in a battle and we must fight it but we can fight it because we have King Jesus as our general, His blood as our guarantee and so long as we have his testimony that he is king and he is Christ in a week and that's that and believe that and there's no one who can defeat one of his subjects even if they kill us, that's easy fight.

Someone comes and puts a good gun to your head and says deny Jesus or die. Like okay, I will die. Not denying Jesus. That's actually much easier. Then when sin rises from your remaining fleshliness and says, deny Jesus for a little while and enjoy me. But in that moment, remember, you're in a battle and don't deny Jesus fight against the sin.

Ultimately, in the end, it's all win the war. Let's pray. We thank you Lord for this portion of your word that we might have it in this time together as a family as a household of which you are our covenant God. And we are your very own people and we pray that your spirit would bless it to us that we would rejoice and have confidence in the victory of Christ that we would overcome by the blood of the Lamb that we would listen to the convicting rebukes of the spirit.

And yet, be able to reject the accusations of the devil for which Christ is atoned, help us, Lord, to remember that we are in battle, so that we will be wise and faithful to do battle for. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.