

Revelation: Lesson #103 – The Dragon Attacks

Notes for Parents to Study With Their Children

For Sunday, June 7th

Read Revelation 12:1 – 13:18 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes.)

Memory Verse: Rev. 12:5 “She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.”

The Dragon, the Woman and the Male Child

- In chapter 12 of Revelation we meet three main characters:
 1. **The Dragon.** We are plainly told who the dragon is: He is the “one who is called the Devil and Satan.” The dragon knocks 1/3 of all the stars down which may be saying that when Satan, who was once an angel, rebelled against God, he led part of the angels to rebel with him. Both here and in other parts of the Bible Satan is said to have his own angels. This dragon, the Devil, has been able to deceive nearly the whole world.
 2. **The Woman.** We meet a woman who is obviously very important. She is clothed with the sun, stands on the moon and wears a crown with twelve stars. This woman is about to have a child, and the dragon was standing nearby ready to attack and eat the child as soon as he was born. She had a Son who was destined to rule the whole world from God’s throne. That Son is obviously Jesus. Several things in the Bible make us think of this woman.
 - First, there was Eve. She was told that the Serpent would be crushed by her descendant (Genesis 3:15). This was predicting that Christ would overcome the devil.
 - Then there was the nation of Israel. They were the people Christ was born from (Romans 9:5). The woman in the Revelation 12 had a crown of twelve stars, like the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel) and the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - Of course, we also think of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was an Israelite and physically bore Jesus. She, Jesus and her husband Joseph escaped from an attack to kill Jesus when the Lord was just a baby. Remember the Dragon wanted to kill the woman’s baby.
 3. **The Male Child.** This is the woman’s Son that was born. The dragon did not eat her Son, but in time He was caught up to God and to His throne. As we have already said, this describes Jesus. Of course, Jesus did not go up into heaven to rule as a child, but a prophecy in Isaiah 9 had foretold about Jesus, “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His



shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore” (vs. 6-7). And we remember that Mary had been told "you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

The War in Heaven

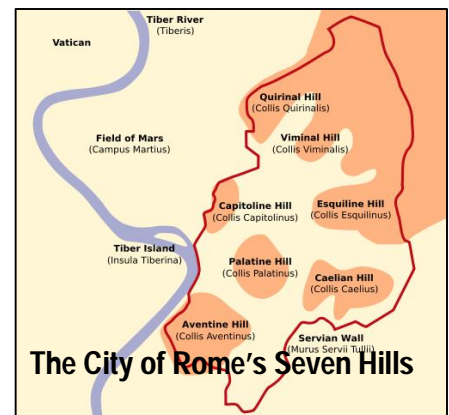
- Next, John is told about a war that started in heaven. Michael, who is the head angel, and other angels that were loyal to God fought against the Dragon (the devil) and his angels.
- But the Dragon was not strong enough to win. He and his angels were cast out of heaven.
- We also realize that the Dragon would be completely defeated by what Jesus was going to do. The victory over the Devil would take three things:
 1. **The Blood of the Lamb** - Jesus’ death on the cross would give us the victory over sin. Sin is the devil’s greatest tools. I John 3:8 says, “the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.” When Jesus was just about to go to the cross, He said He was about to deal with the devil, “Now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” (John 12:31). So if we are going to win against the Devil, we have to be “washed in the blood of the Lamb.”
 2. **The Testimony of His Word** - The Devil’s defeat would come because the Word of the Lord is powerful, but to use it Christians must put the Word of God on like armor. “Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” Truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, and salvation are all part of that armor, along with “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:13-17).
 3. **The Faithfulness of Christians** – The dragon can be overcome if we love God and Jesus more than we love our own lives. We have to be faithful to Them no matter what it cost us. When Christians were being threatened with death just because they were Christians, they still had to be faithful. We should never let anything in our lives be more important than serving God. In Romans 16:20 Paul promised that God would help crush Satan under their feet.
- Jesus had died for man’s sins, His word was being spread, Christ’s followers were obeying Him. Heaven rejoiced that Satan was being dealt with: “Salvation has come now. Power and the kingdom of God and the authority of His Christ have now come, because the one who accuses our brethren before God night and day has been thrown down.”

The Woman's Children.

- The dragon had been cast out of heaven and that was good news. But there was some bad news, too -- the devil was now on earth. "The devil has come down to you and he is very angry because he knows he will have only a little time." Peter said, "The devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour" (I Peter 5:8).
- We are told that the woman had other children and it is explained that these children are those who "who keep the commandments of God and hold on to their testimony of Jesus Christ." The New Testament talks about how those who follow Christ are also part of God's family. Jesus said that Christians were His brothers and sisters.
- But here is something we need to realize. The Devil hates true Christians. Revelation tells us that "the dragon was very angry with the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her children – those who keep the commandments of God and hold on to their testimony of Jesus Christ. The Dragon was about to start a war against the church of Christ.

The Dragon Sends the Beast to Make War With the Saints

- John is told that the Dragon is ready to make war with the followers of Christ, so the next thing John sees is a beast coming up out of the sea. This beast was like a leopard, and his feet were like a bear, and his mouth was like a lion. He had seven heads and ten horns, and on each of the horns there was a crown.
- We are told later in Revelation that the seven heads are seven mountains of the great city that ruled over the whole earth (17:9,18) and that the ten horns are ten kings that would make war with the Jesus the Lamb (17:12).
 - The Roman empire was the beast that had fiercely conquered nation after nation bringing them under their control.
 - The "great city" of Rome was their capital (like our Washington, D.C.). It ruled over the Roman empire which was the largest, strongest empire that ever existed. The city of Rome has been well known in history as 'City of Seven Hills', so this fits well with the idea of the "seven mountains" of the great city in Revelation.
- On the heads of the beast were blasphemous names. Blasphemy means to "speak against", but many times in the Bible it is talking about those who speak against God. Many of the Roman emperors wanted to be worshipped and wore titles that identified them as deity. Domitian, an emperor around John's time wanted to be addressed as "our Lord and our God." The beast speaks terrible and arrogant words that honored himself, honored false gods, but didn't honor the true God. The beast would also try to make people curse Jesus Christ.



- We find out that the beast is not able to have all this power by himself, but the Dragon, the devil, gave his power to the beast so that he could use this power to make war with Christians.
- Because the beast, the Roman empire, was so powerful and had so much money and built so many beautiful buildings and offered so many entertaining things for people to do, the whole world thought it was wonderful. And because the emperors that ruled Rome were so powerful, almost everyone in the world was willing to worship them. That was very wrong, because God is the only one who should be worshipped. But one thing the world didn't know was that the Dragon, the devil) was really the one giving the power to the beast, so the world was really worshipping the devil.

A Second Beast

- As John looks, he sees another beast, this one coming up from the earth. This beast had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. It may have looked harmless like a lamb, but the voice coming from this beast was really the dragon's voice (the devil). The devil was giving power to this beast, too.
- This beast's job was to get people to worship the first beast. Both religious people and government people in the Roman empire were had images or statues of emperors built for their community to come and worship. They were able to deceive people into believing that the emperors were really gods. Later in Revelation this beast is called "the false prophet" (16:13; 19:20; 20:10).
- To the right is the head and of arm of what was once a large statue of Domitian, who was one of the emperors that wanted to be worshipped. This image was in a huge Temple dedicated to Domitian, his father Vespasian and his brother Titus. All three of them had been Roman emperors. That temple was in Ephesus, where one of the seven churches of Asia was located.
- If anyone would not worship at this statue, they could get into a lot of trouble with the Roman government. First off, in order to be able to buy or sell anything, you would have to have the mark of this beast on you. Just as God had put a spiritual mark on His people, a mark was on the people who worshipped the beast.
- Christians refused to worship the Roman emperors. They refused to worship the God's of Rome. They tried to be good citizens, but they could not bow down and worship the emperor. The knew that Jesus was their greatest King and had to stay faithful to Him. So when Christians refused to bow down, they got in trouble with the Roman government. Many who refused to worship the beast would be put in prison, tortured or killed. Their families could have their houses and possessions taken away from them.



The Truth About the Beast

- It seemed like everyone else in the world was willing to say that the Roman emperors were gods, and were willing to worship him. It did look like these emperors could

accomplish anything they wanted to. It looked like the beast had all the power in the world.

- But God's faithful people refused to worship the beast even if it meant losing their lives. Now the Lord had a message for His people about the beast. The beast had a number and that number was 666.
- We have seen over and over again in Revelation that often 7 was a number used of things belonging to God: 7 churches, 7 Spirits, 7 lampstands, 7 stars, 7 seals, 7 angels, 7 trumpets, and 7 bowls of wrath. This idea of 7 probably all goes back to Genesis when God created the heavens and the earth in 6 days and having finished, rested on the 7th day. Beasts and man were created on the 6th day.
- John says that 666 reveals what this beast really is. He isn't a god, he is a man. John says his number is that of man. The world might be deceived about the beast, but God's people shouldn't fall for it. The beast was just a man and didn't deserve to be worshipped.
- If we are going to live in a way that pleases God, we must never put anything ahead of God. Nothing in our lives should be more important than Him. Nothing we could do should be as important as obeying Him.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

The Woman

12:1 And a great sign appeared in heaven – A woman clothed with the sun and the moon was under her feet, and on her head she wore a crown of twelve stars.

2 Now this woman was about to have a child, and she was having labor pains and was ready to deliver the child.

The Dragon

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven. And I could see a large, fiery red dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns. There were 7 crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail pulled away a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. Now this dragon stood waiting as the woman was about to deliver the baby. He wanted to eat the child as soon as it was born.

The Son

5 And there was born to her a boy, a Son who would rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

6 Then the woman escaped into the wilderness to a place God had prepared for her where she could be fed 1,260 days.

The Dragon is Thrown Out of Heaven

7 And a war started in heaven. Michael, the arch-angel and his angels fought against the dragon. And the dragon fought back with his own angels.

8 But the dragon was not strong enough and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

9 The great dragon had been thrown out, the one who is called the Devil and Satan. He is the one who leads the whole world away from what is right. He was cast out of heaven into the earth and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice speaking in heaven, "Salvation has come now. Power and the kingdom of God and the authority of His Christ have now come, because the one who accuses our brethren before God night and day has been thrown down."

11 The dragon was defeated by the blood of the Lamb and by the brethren's willingness to testify the Word of God. And he was also defeated because they did not love their own lives so much that they were unwilling to die for the Lamb.

The Dragon is On the Earth

12 So, heaven and all your inhabitants, be glad that the devil has been thrown out. But for you that live on the earth and the sea, the news is bad. The devil has come down to you and he is very angry because he knows he will have only a little time.

13 When the dragon realized he had been cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who had the male child.

14 So the woman was given two wings of a great eagle so she could fly into the wilderness to a place where she could be fed and helped for a time, and times and half a time. There she could be away from the serpent's presence.

15 Then the serpent started throwing water from his mouth like a flood coming after the woman so he could cause her to be carried away by the flood.

16 But the earth helped the woman, opening up and swallowing the water which the dragon has thrown at the woman.

The Dragon is Ready to Make War With Christians

17 So the dragon was very angry with the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her children – the children who keep the commandments of God and hold on to their testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Beast

13:1 I was standing on the sand of the sea when I saw a beast come up out of the sea. This beast had seven heads and ten horns, and on each of the horns there was a crown. On his heads was a blasphemous name.

2 Now this beast I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like a bear, and his mouth was like a lion. The dragon (who wanted to make war with the followers of Jesus Christ) gave the beast his power, his throne and his great authority.

3 I could see that one of the heads on the beast looked like it had been wounded to death, but the wound had been healed. All the world thought the beast was wonderful.

4 And they worshipped the beast, but really they were worshipping the dragon who was the power behind the beast. They would say things like, "Who is like the beast?" and "Who could hope to win a war against him?"

5 The beast was given a mouth that spoke arrogant and blasphemous words. And he was given the authority to continue for 42 months.

6 He even opened his mouth to speak blasphemy against God and His tabernacle and all those who dwell in heaven.

7 Now he was also allowed to make war with the saints and to win over them. In fact, he had power over all tribes, languages and nations.

8 So everyone living on the earth worshipped him. Everyone except those whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life (the Lamb whose death was planned before the world even began).

9 If any of you have ears, you better listen to that.

10 Those who gather up captives will end up going into captivity. Those who kill with the sword will be killed with the sword. This is the steadfastness and the faith of the saints.

Another Beast

11 Then I saw another beast, this one coming up from the earth. This one had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.

12 This beast used the all the same authority the first beast had and would do his work in the presence of that beast. This second beast's job was to make all the people of the earth worship the first beast (the one whose deadly wound had been healed).

13 The second beast could do great signs in front of people like making fire come out of heaven.

14 Through these miracles he did before the beast, he was able to deceive those on the earth. He told the people on the earth that they should make an image of the beast (the one who had been wounded by a sword but was now alive).

15 Now he could make these images of the beast look like they were alive and could speak. If there was anyone who would not worship the image, he would work to have them killed.

16 He makes everyone, the important people and the everyday people, the rich and the poor, the free people and the slaves, to accept a mark on their right hand or on their forehead.

17 In order to be able to buy or sell anything, you would have to have this mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.

18 This is where it will take some wisdom. If you have the understanding, count the number of the beast. Count it, because it is really just the number of man. His number is 666.