

Pulling Back the Curtain, Part II- The Accuser is Cast Out of Heaven!

Call to Worship: Daniel 12:1-3

Hymn #24 (supp)- *Victory in Jesus*

1st Scripture: Daniel 10:1-11:1

Hymn #489- *The Son of God Goes Forth to War*

2nd Scripture: Revelation 12:1-12

Hymn #596- *Jesus Lives, and So Shall I*

Introduction:

Last time, we saw two signs, which carried us back to the fall of man, when God had cursed the serpent for deceiving the woman (Eve), which led to the fall of mankind. In Genesis 3:15, God had stated that He would put enmity between the woman and the serpent, and between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, and the serpent would bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman.

And here, within the first seven verses of Revelation, chapter twelve, we find the revealed fulfillment of that very promise. Indeed, the serpent, the devil/satan, represented by the symbol of the dragon here in Revelation, had done all he could to thwart the purpose of God, proclaimed back in Genesis, chapter 3. He put forth his greatest efforts to snuff out the Seed of the woman, right up to the time of His birth. But he failed. And the Seed of the woman, namely Christ, fulfilled the promise in its entirety, crushing the head of the serpent at the cross. He gained the victory in His death, and the confirmation of this victory was proclaimed three days later at His resurrection. And the flawless mission of the Messiah was complete, when He ascended up to heaven in a cloud, to be crowned the universal King of heaven and earth and of all things. And He was seated at the right hand of God until He has finished building His church, upon the cornerstone of His indestructible, redemptive victory!

Following the ascension of Christ, the “woman,” the church, was to flee into the wilderness, that place of testing and affliction, where the enemy would now gear his attacks toward her, since he could no longer harm the Messianic Seed. And it is there, that the church is charged to stand fast, to persevere, and to overcome by the shed blood of the Messianic Lamb who was slain unto her justification and redemption. And it is there, that God would sanctify

and purify the woman by the very means of the opposition that would come against her, through the dragon and his ferocious, wicked allies (soon to be introduced).

All of this is given us, as a means of pulling back the curtain of our natural senses, so that we could see all that is really going on, from the standpoint of God and heaven, in light of what “seems to be” from the standpoint of a broken, dark and fallen world.

Well, now, as we come to verses 7-12, the curtain is pulled back once again, only this time, as a means of more specifically exposing what Christ’s victory has accomplished in the heavenly realm. Here, we find a revealing of the consequence of Christ’s victory at the cross, with respect to the dragon. It is a revelation of the dragon, receiving the fatal blow from the Seed of the woman, whose heel had been bruised at the cross.

I. The Accuser is Cast Out of Heaven (read verses 7-9)

Here, we are told that “war broke out in heaven” between Michael and his angels and the dragon (satan) and his angels. Now, earlier, for our first Scripture reading (in Daniel 10), we read a text that I have turned to in the past, which indeed confirms that angelic beings, “war against each other,” in some sense, behind the scenes of our visible world. In fact, behind the visible wars of this world, and behind the rising and falling of nations, there are always spirit beings at work, in contention with one another. Now, while we can be sure that they are not using bazookas and atomic bombs or any physical weapons (against each other), it is important to note that in some way, evil, fallen angels and righteous, godly angels contend with each other.

And furthermore, in our first Scripture reading (along with Jude 1:9), we find that “Michael” is a righteous archangel (a “prince among angels”), who has other angels under his charge and authority. And his most specific responsibility as a servant of God (at least in keeping with what we find in Scripture—Daniel 12:1), is to defend and protect the people of God. And so, here, in some sense (keeping in mind that we are still in an apocalyptic Book full of symbols), Michael and his angels are contending with the “prince of the power of the air” (the prince of demons), satan and his angels, on behalf of the people of God.

And we are told that, though the dragon and his angels fought, “they did not prevail,” and there was no place found for them in heaven any longer. Satan, and his minions; the adversary, the accuser, the slanderer, the deceiver of the whole world, and his demonic cohorts were cast out of heaven and to the earth. Now, next time, Lord willing (in verses 13ff), we will continue on to consider what the dragon specifically does, when he is cast to the earth (which again, is very relevant for us), but for now, in keeping with our text, let us move on to consider how Michael ultimately obtained this victory, and the inevitable blessed consequence of it.

II. A Victory Long Awaited

Now brethren, it is critical that we stop and spend time analyzing what has just happened here, because this is, indeed, the recording of a watershed moment in heaven and on earth. This is “the cross” from the standpoint of heaven. This is the historical occurrence of a long awaited victory; a victory that has been foretold in Genesis 3:15, and which has travelled on the backs of many prophetic utterances in a corrupt and fallen world, longing for the righteous intervention of God (on behalf of a helplessly lost people), finally finding its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of the Seed of the woman! [Read verse 10]

What exactly has happened at the cross, from the standpoint of heaven? What is the primary message behind this victory, obtained by Michael the archangel and his righteous angelic companions? How has he finally defeated the devil and his wicked minions? On the basis of what authority, has he finally cast out the serpent of old, who has arrogantly flashed forth the work of his rebellion, in heaven, for thousands of years?

Well, brethren, we begin by considering the true power of satan; that power which he has arrogantly stood upon since the fall. Wherein lies satan’s power against the people of God? Well, for starters, we must understand the very meaning of his “labels/names,” if we are to locate his primary position of power. Indeed, there is much in a “name.” The two primary names given to the wicked, cunning serpent/dragon are “the devil” and “satan.” And unfortunately, when we hear these names, we tend to identify them solely by the “dragon symbol,” given in revelation, while neglecting to process their true meaning. In other words, while satan is indeed a cunning, wicked ferocious, heartless dragon on the inside, this picture alone is not sufficient to

identify his “fullness,” which is why we are given all of his labels here in our text. What are we to make of his various labels? Well, certainly, when he is labeled “that serpent of old,” we are meant to turn our attention immediately to the fall, where every ounce of evil born in this glorious creation finds its origin. And we don’t have to look very far or too carefully to see the fruit of that evil, because it is everywhere around us and even in us. All of the corruption, wickedness, lustfulness, hatred, murder, lying, envy, pride...etc, find their root in the fall of our first parents. So, when we see the terms “that serpent *of old*,” the package of our own “present day” corruption ought to add enough weight to the picture of where and when this all started, and who had helped to initiate it. And so, the long awaited question, from the standpoint of a righteous heaven and a world gone desperately wrong is, “When will God deal with this wicked serpent?” And our text brings us to that breath of fresh air, which states, “Ahhh, finally, here is the beginning of his inevitable end!”

But then, we are also given the terms “satan” and “devil,” both “legal” terms, meant to bring us into a courtroom setting. And it is in these two terms that we find the real power of the wicked serpent. The word “satan” means “adversary,” because he is the one who contends with God and His elect people. In fact, satan primarily contends with God, by contending with the people of God. And rather than righteously crush and justly destroy all of mankind, and rid Himself of the “adversary” altogether, God so loves His elect people; He so loves His chosen ones, that He bears with the wicked “adversary” for a time, doing the unthinkable in redeeming his people *right in the face of the adversary*. God is patient, but when He brings things to their completion, His glory is magnified all the more! And the word, “devil” means “slanderer.” The adversary lies and slanders; and he repeatedly accuses the people of God before the righteous tribunal of God, throughout all of history...that is, until he is cast out by Michael. Look at those words in verse 10 again, brethren. “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.’” You see, once again, a *loud voice* proclaims this reality, because it is monumental!

The devil; the adversary; the slandering, wicked, prosecuting attorney, found his power right here: He would accuse God’s elect; he would accuse God’s fallen and sinful elect before the throne of a perfectly righteous and just God, day and night, as if to charge God Himself with

injustice for allowing such sinful people to exist. And brethren, man has given the devil much fuel to work with, because our sins are indeed great. All throughout biblical history, we find evidence of the sins of even the most godly men and women. The adversary could approach the throne of God with tangible, legitimate accusations. The evidence was real and undeniable! You see, the ideal picture of this is found in Zechariah 3:1-5, where the devil stands, accusing Joshua the high priest of many grievous sins, pictured by his filthy robe. And every child of God, throughout all of history could stand right there in Joshua's shoes. The devil screams and yells, and points at the obvious, namely, that Joshua was wearing a robe that was covered with feces and dung, indicating that he was indeed defiled in the sight of God. And like Joshua, we would all be silent, because we are all indeed guilty! And the accuser seems to have won! How could this righteous God, justify an ungodly people, whom He has set His love upon, while remaining just at the same time? And so, all throughout history, this was the substance of the devil's power. It was an evil, gross, wicked power, obtained by ultimate deception, but it was real nonetheless. Indeed, we, the people of God, are all sinful; we are by nature children of wrath; we are incapable of dwelling in the presence of our holy God. The line of demarcation is set; the wall is put up; the enmity is in place, and it seems like a hopeless situation.

This is in the background of the monumental event that takes place in our main text, here in Revelation 12, brethren! What finally happens, here? God obtains the victory on behalf of His people; God removes the filthy robe and provides the righteous robe for Joshua...how, by the cross of Christ! Christ steps into human flesh; the unthinkable happens...God becomes a man! The Seed of the woman is born! He overcomes every temptation and trial, and He is crucified, bearing the wrath of God on behalf of God's beloved elect, so that they can be given His righteousness, while He has born their sins! "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him!"

And so, the adversary can no longer find a place in heaven! He is stripped of all of his legal, adversarial power! He tries to accuse, and accuse and accuse, but he is no longer given a hearing, because he now accuses at the foot of a cross, where justice has wholly been served, on behalf of all of God's people! He says, "But look at their sins!" And Christ says, "Tetelestai!" "It is Finished!" "Paid in full!" Michael and his angels move in and arrest a now powerless satan, and he and his wicked minions are cast out of heaven! They are no longer welcomed into

the courtroom, because the eternal verdict is in! Innocent! Innocent! Innocent! Because the guilt has been born by the Son of God!

How do the people of God overcome that serpent of old? We are told in verse 11. “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.” These, naturally fallen and sinfully depraved creatures, set their feet upon the Rock; they overcome every accusation and every iota of guilt by the poured out blood of the Lamb! They are redeemed! They are purchased unto God and cleansed of their sins! And their lives bear testimony to their faith. Their perseverance in the face of the devil’s remaining, ultimately powerless onslaught, confirms and solidifies the reality of their testimony. They show by their actions that though they lose everything in this world (even their very lives), their hope is bound to another Kingdom, a Kingdom that cannot fail. Their God-given faith, takes them above the trials and tribulations of this life, and into the Kingdom of God, where they are already seated with Christ, and are soon to join Him *bodily* in glory. They did not love their lives to the death!

You see, Michael’s victory is ultimately tied to what Christ accomplished at the cross. Our defense attorney, as it were, brings out his secret weapon, a “fountain filled with redeeming blood,” and he dismantles the now groundless charges of the “adversary,” who is then cast out to the earth. And what happens now?

III. The Aftermath of this Victory (Read verse 12)

1) There is great rejoicing in the heavens!

2) The defeated dragon, who has been cast down to the earth, and whose ultimate destruction is drawing near, wreaks havoc on the earth, ultimately seeking to vent his wrath on the woman (the church). He knows that he is defeated. He knows that he has been stripped of his power and authority. He knows that his time is short. And so, he does what he does best. He seeks to destroy everything he can in the limited time he has...but his doom awaits him. And the elect will ultimately overcome him, by the shed blood of the slain Lamb, the prosperous Seed of the woman!

Conclusion

1) Heaven rejoices on our behalf, should we rejoice? And should we rejoice in the manifestation of God's great glory, achieved by this monumental event?

Read verse 10 again. Salvation has replaced condemnation! Strength has replaced weakness! The Kingdom of God has replaced the kingdoms of this world (and their hopeless bondage)! The power of Christ has replaced the power of the devil!

2) How should we live in light of this? What does your witness *presently* look like? (see verse 11). Indeed, this is all meant to enforce what was written in the letters to the seven churches of Asia, in chapters two and three (and all churches of all time)!

3) Recognize, that if you are outside of Christ, you are *presently* under the deceptive power of the devil (see verse 9---literally "the one deceiving" → present tense).

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Romans 8:28-39