

Worship Guide - Lake Mary

WORSHIP SERVICE -

12.19.2021

WAR WITH THE DRAGON

I. INTRODUCTION

MAIN POINT: Christ's exaltation results in Satan's expulsion from heaven, the silencing of the devil's accusations against the saints, and enables the saints to conquer the devil.

Revelation 12:7-17

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 And 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. 10 And 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. 11 And 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. 12 Therefore, 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!”

13 And 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. 14 But 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. 15 The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. 16 But 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. 17 Then 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.

II. THE DRAGON THROWN DOWN

- “*Now a war arose in heaven...*”
- Who were the opposing forces? Michael and his angels VS the dragon and his angels.
- Who instigated this war? The offensive was led by one that the OT calls the Prince of God's people—Michael the archangel. (Dan. 10:13,21;12:1; Jude 1:9)

- Daniel 10 -- an angel tells Daniel that he has come to give him understanding in the visions as a response to his prayer. However, he was delayed because the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to his defense.
- Daniel closes with a promise that in the end times, Michael, the great prince, who has charge of God's people, will arise.
- Rev. 12 is describing the fulfillment of that ancient prophecy and promise as this powerful heavenly being Michael is now seen by John, as representing God's covenant community and representing Christ, engaged in warfare against the dragon in the heavenliness.
- What was the outcome of the war? The dragon was defeated, no longer having a place in heaven, and he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Notice down says this three times, that the dragon was thrown down.
- When did this war take place?
- Some seem to think that this is referring to the rebellion Lucifer led in heaven (Isaiah 14:12-20; Ezekiel 28:11-19).
- However, this event has to coincide with 12:5, "*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...*"
- What this cosmic warfare symbolizes is that Christ's exaltation TO heaven is the catalyst for the dragon's expulsion FROM heaven.
- 12:10, "*Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of Christ have come, for the accuser of the brethren has been thrown down...*"
- NOW—The inauguration and manifestation of Christ's kingdom rule directly corresponds to the defeat of Satan.
- **John 12:31-32** Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."
- The dragon was the impediment to the realization of the kingdom of Messiah, and now he has been removed, cast out, and subsequent to Christ's exaltation, Christ will draw all of his people to himself.
- Jesus rose triumphantly from the grave and ascended to take his rightful place of rule in the kingdom of God.

III. HOW THE SAINTS CONQUER THE DRAGON

- What does it mean that the dragon is "thrown down?"
- Thrown down is not a change in geographical locations—heaven down to earth.
- The term is one of a legal distinction; something that is happening in the legal realm, like in a court of law.
- The dragon is called the devil.
- Devil (Greek, διάβολος—diabolos) means slanderer, adversary.
- Scripture portrays our enemy, as a slanderer, hurling accusations against God's people in a heavenly tribunal.
- Satan's job description in essence, is to accuse the saints.
- Example of Satan's accusation against Job (Job 1:6-11)
- We've all experienced the onslaught of Satan's accusations.
- Christ's exaltation resulted in Satan's expulsion from Heaven's courtroom.
- He has been thrown out from the courtroom of heaven, that is what is meant by, "*there was no longer any place for them in heaven.*"
- Satan can no longer stand before God and level an accusation against the elect because Christ has neutered the enemy's argument.
- **Romans 8:33** Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

- Christ has silenced Satan's attempt to accuse us before God because God has justified his people.
- Now it's important for us to understand how Christ defeated our accuser because it is the basis for how we conquer and overthrow him today.
- v11 And 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.

This is how we conquer and overcome the Devil's accusations today:

1. THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

- The blood of Jesus is the means by which Satan was disbarred and his accusations nullified.
- Christ is the sacrificial Lamb of God.
- **Romans 3:23-26** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
- Satan's accusations were right—we are sinners, we do fall short of the glory of God. We could never attain the righteousness that God requires. We are guilty!
- But God accomplishes the redemption of his children, by putting forth His Son, Jesus Christ, as the propitiation for our sins.
- Propitiation means that Jesus' sacrifice is the means by which God's justice is satisfied. His sacrifice turned away the wrath of God that we rightly and justly deserved.
- Jesus obliterated the basis of the devil's accusations against the saints.
- God does this by his grace as a gift.
- What is our response to this lavish gift? Receive God's gracious gift by placing our faith and trust in Jesus.
- Because Christ is our Advocate, Satan's tongue can bring no accusation that can erase your name from His Book of Life!
- When the dragon breathes out accusations against you, flee to Calvary, where the wrath of God was already poured out upon Christ and his blood was poured out for your sins.
- We conquer the accuser through our trust in the blood of Christ.

2. THE WORD OF OUR TESTIMONY

- Every time the gospel is proclaimed, Satan hears his death sentence.
- Every time we open our mouth to proclaim the good news, we spread the news of Satan's defeat!
- When we announce the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, Satan's power is diminished, and the saints conquer him.
- This is why we must know the gospel truths and continually rehearse them.
- This is why we must spread the good news far and wide.

3. SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

- This is what it means by "*for they loved not their lives even unto death.*"
- Not only do we conquer because Christ saved us by his blood and our proclamation of the good news, but we also conquer by embracing suffering for the sake of Christ.

- We conquer the devil by enduring any suffering for Christ up until the point of actual martyrdom.
- This is one of the major themes of Revelation, the suffering of Christians is not a sign of their defeat by the dragon, it is not Satan's victory, but rather the saints' victory over the dragon.
- We overcome by following the Lamb wherever he goes, following in his path which is suffering then exaltation.

V12 Therefore, 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!"

- The heavens rejoice because the accuser has been thrown down.
- But a woe is pronounced upon the earth, for the world is the devil's sphere of influence and authority.
- And he has turned his great wrath upon the Church because he knows his time is short.

4. THE PROTECTION OF GOD

- What was hinted at in 12:6 is now more fully developed. The Church is the new target of the dragon's malevolence and fury.
- The way John expresses this is by using Exodus imagery.
- In the OT, Pharaoh is likened to a dragon, a sea monster, he was the enemy of God' people (Ezek 32:2).
- Where does God take his people to provide a place of protection for them? The wilderness.
- When God speaks to his people about how he delivered them what imagery does he use?
- **Exodus 19:3-4** while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.
- One of the most beautiful promises also forms the background for this passage.
- **Isaiah 40:30-31** Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.
- We conquer the dragon because God will strengthen and nourish the church during her wandering through the wilderness of the world.
- The dragon will attempt to exterminate the church through lies and deceptions. He will commission his two beasts to deceive and persecute her.
- But God will spiritually protect his people throughout the entirety of the church age though she will be relentlessly pursued and persecuted by the dragon.
- V17 is where we find ourselves today.
- 17 Then 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.
- The offspring of the woman is the church from the earthly perspective, followers of Jesus who keep his commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus, enduring suffering and persecution as they war against the dragon.
- You overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony.
- Tell the glorious good news of salvation through Christ and keep reminding the devil that his time is short and his doom secured.

- Christ triumphed and so will we!