

Rev. 12 “The Woman, the Child and the Dragon”

For the Children: What would you do if someone broke into your house and tried to hurt your parents? Would you run for help, or try to help resist these bad men? Well, many people are trying to hurt God’s church, to destroy it. That church is like a mother to us, because she feeds us with God’s Word, trains us with her discipline and comforts us – also with God’s Word. If anyone tries to hurt the church or her members, we should be ready to help defend her in any way we can. **Questions:** How do people try to hurt the church? Why does the devil encourage these attacks on the church? What can we do to help the church?

Introduction:

First Point: The Woman

- 1) An OT Image: The image of the Church as a woman in labour is grounded in the OT. See Is. 66:7, Micah 4:10. Israel, as the OT Church, is connected to the NT Church
- 2) Mother Church: The “woman” produces one special Child, - Christ, as to His human nature, grew up in the covenant community of the OT and under its ministry. The Church also has many other children, the “rest of her children” (v. 17) – all other believers. See Gal. 4:26. Our “mother” should be loved and honoured and supported!
- 3) Mother under Attack: Our “mother” should especially be supported because she is under attack from Satan – the “red dragon.” He is angered by his defeat by Christ (v. 17, so he pursues the “woman” (v. 13). He is even permitted to do harm to her – to sweep away 1/3 of the “stars of heaven” (Dan. 8:10). But the Lord protects the “woman” and her “children.” She is helped to “flee into the wilderness,” the place where God protected Israel fleeing from Egypt and also a persecuted Elijah. The Lord nourishes the Church in this New Exodus, for 1260 days – another symbol for the *entire* last days, between Christ’s two Comings. Moreover, despite the trial of persecution, flight and testing, the Church is made glorious in Christ – clothed with sun and moon and stars, like Joseph in his dream (Gen. 37:9-11)

Second Point: The Dragon

- 1) Serpent to Dragon: The red dragon is Satan. In Gen. 3, he is a deceitful serpent. Here his power and authority are stressed. Hence he is depicted as a great dragon, with 7 crowned heads and 10 horns, with a powerful tail and able to call a torrent of persecution upon the Church
- 2) Two Falls: Satan fell the first time when he rebelled against God. But he was given power to deceive all the nations on earth except Israel in the OT; and permission to appear in God’s heavenly court to report and to make accusations against the saints, to suggest that they belong to him not to God (e.g., Job, the High-Priest Joshua in Zech. 3). However, Christ’s coming brought the Gospel to all the nations and had Satan cast out from heaven as our accuser. Christ’s battle on earth is mirrored in a heavenly battle between Michael and Satan – with Satan the loser. See Lk. 19:18, Mt. 12:29 on this second “fall” of Satan. Satan can, however, still deceive many among the nations, and do limited harm to the Church. He is enraged, and has redoubled his efforts to do so in the little time left to him

Third Point: The Child

- 1) The Child Attacked: Satan tried to abort Christ by killing off or subverting His ancestors in the OT. Then he tried to have Herod kill the infant-Christ. Later, he moved wicked men to crucify the Lord. But all this only brought in Christ’s Kingdom and led on to His ascension, according to God’s plan. Now He is beyond Satan’s reach. By taking on Satan’s accusations against us, Christ has guaranteed that we are now free from the devil’s accusations – hence his removal as our accuser from heaven
- 2) The King Manifested: Satan’s attacks have only led to Christ being raised to all power & authority as the Great King – as per Ps. 2. Even while Satan attacks the Church, it is Christ who really rules. Satan still brings woe upon the earth, but believers can rejoice. For we overcome by the blood of the Lamb (v. 11). This overcoming is only by those who hold to the testimony of Jesus, and love His Word more than life (vss. 11, 17)

Conclusion

