

Only a Little Time Left (12:1-17)

... woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has come down to you! He is filled with terrible anger, for he knows that he only has a little time!"

^{12:1}Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and with the moon under her feet, and on her head was a crown of twelve stars. ²She was pregnant and was screaming in labor pains, struggling to give birth.

³Then another sign appeared in heaven: a huge red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadem crowns. ⁴Now the dragon's tail swept away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. ⁵So the woman gave birth to a son, a male child, who is going to rule over all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was suddenly caught up to God and to his throne, ⁶and she fled into the wilderness where a place had been prepared for her by God, so she could be taken care of for 1,260 days.

^{12:7}Then war broke out in heaven:

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But the dragon was not strong enough to prevail, so there was no longer any place left in heaven for him and his angels. ⁹So that huge dragon – the ancient serpent, the one called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world – was thrown down to the earth, and his angels along with him.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying,

“The salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God,
and the ruling authority of his Christ, have now come,
because the accuser of our brothers and sisters,
the one who accuses them day and night before our God,
has been thrown down.

¹¹But they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
and they did not love their lives so much
that they were afraid to die.

¹²Therefore you heavens rejoice, and all who reside in them!
But woe to the earth and the sea
because the devil has come down to you!
He is filled with terrible anger,
for he knows that he only has a little time!”

^{12:13}Now when the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of a giant eagle so that she could fly out into the wilderness, to the place God prepared for her, where she is taken care of – away from the presence of the serpent – for a time, times, and half a time. ¹⁵Then the serpent spouted water like a river out of his mouth after the woman in an attempt to sweep her away by a flood, ¹⁶but the earth came to her rescue; the ground opened up and swallowed the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth. ¹⁷So the dragon became enraged at the woman and went away to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep God’s commandments and hold to the testimony about Jesus.

Father

You are graciously revealing to us the spiritual battle that is going on in our world for the hearts and minds of people. As we study this week, Lord help us to base our thoughts on your word. Guide us through Your Holy Spirit to have insight into what is really going on. Prepare our hearts and minds to use this truth in the battles ahead

Amen

Monday

In chapters 12 and 13 we will be introduced to seven main characters as we were told in 10:11.

Look at the references below and give each character a name and a preliminary identification. It is ok to change this later:

1. _____ = _____ (12:1-2)
2. _____ = _____ (12:3-4,9)
3. _____ = _____ (12:5)
4. _____ = _____ (12:7)
5. _____ = _____ (12:17)
6. _____ = _____ (13:1-7)
7. _____ = _____ (13:11-12)

This week we will concentrate our attention on the five characters introduced in chapter 12. John records that he sees a “great sign” appear in heaven: *a woman*.

What key things do you note about her in this chapter?

Who or what do you think the woman represents? Why?

Some of the imagery described about this woman is very familiar from Joseph's dream:

Then he had another dream, and told it to his brothers. "Look," he said. "I had another dream. The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." -- Genesis 37:9 (NET)

In that dream these represented his father Israel, his wife, and his eleven brothers (37:10).

To whom does this woman give birth (12:5)?

Does this change your opinion as to the identity of the woman? How?

What happens to her after her Child ascends to God and His throne and when do these things occur (12:6, 13-16)?

Does this change your opinion as to the identity of the woman? If so, how?

Tuesday

The second great character in the end-time drama is a "great red dragon."

What three significant features do you note about his appearance and what do you think they represent?

1. _____ = _____
2. _____ = _____
3. _____ = _____

The word translated *diadem crowns* (*diadema*) is different from the type of victor's crown (*stephanos*) that the woman wore. The picture here is of ruling authority over nations. Notice the similarity with the description in 13:1 of a similar but different character.

*Who is this dragon (12:9)?

What do the “*third of the stars in heaven*” represent” (12:4,7-9)?

What happens to them?

Why do you think the dragon sought to “*devour*” the woman’s child?

What is Satan’s “bread and butter” skill (12:10b)?

How has he adversely affected you and your family with this?

How would you counsel a believer who had an overwhelming sense of condemnation by God because of sin and failure in their life?

Wednesday

What does a “*war in heaven*” describe (12:7)?

Who is Michael (Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9)?

What encouragement do you find in reading that the dragon and his angels “*were not strong enough*” to overcome Michael and his angles (12:8)?

Has the war already taken place or is it still to come?

If the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of God (11:15), then why the warnings (12:11-12)?

Thursday

Who are the “*they*” who “*overcame*” Satan (12:11) and how did they do it?

Knowing this, what should we learn to do when the accuser makes war on us?

Why does Satan know that he only has “*a short time?*”

According to this passage, how long does he have (12:6, 14)?

Who or what does “*giant eagle*” represent (12:14; Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:10-12)?

What is significant about the period “*a time and times and half a time* (12:14; Daniel 12:1-3, 7)?”

Whether literal or not, the flood is a picture of persecution sent against the nation of Israel during the end-time tribulation (Matthew 24:16). Satan has continually tried to destroy the Jews throughout history, but they always survive as a people in 'wilderness' areas.

Friday

Who do you think are “the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus?”

Looking back over this chapter, how would what is written here encourage first-century Christians who are enduring the kind of persecution described in chapters 1-3?

How might that encouragement be different for those living during the end-times?

What applications of this lesson would you make for Christians living today?

What use might this have for helping those who are not yet Christians?

When Evil Wins, Keep Right (13:1-18)

^{13:1}Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, and on its horns were ten diadem crowns, and on its heads a blasphemous name. ²Now the beast that I saw was like a leopard, but its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. The dragon gave the beast his power, his throne, and great authority to rule. ³One of the beast's heads appeared to have been killed, but the lethal wound had been healed. And the whole world followed the beast in amazement; ⁴they worshiped the dragon because he had given ruling authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast too, saying: "Who is like the beast?" and "Who is able to make war against him?" ⁵The beast was given a mouth speaking proud words and blasphemies, and he was permitted to exercise ruling authority for forty-two months. ⁶So the beast opened his mouth to blaspheme against God – to blaspheme both his name and his dwelling place, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷The beast was permitted to go to war against the saints and conquer them. He was given ruling authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation, ⁸and all those who live on the earth will worship the beast, everyone whose name has not been written since the foundation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb who was killed. ⁹If anyone has an ear, he had better listen!

^{13:10} If anyone is meant for captivity,
into captivity he will go.

If anyone is to be killed by the sword,
then by the sword he must be killed.

This requires steadfast endurance and faith from the saints.

^{13:11}Then I saw another beast coming up from the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but was speaking like a dragon. ¹²He exercised all the ruling authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and those who inhabit it worship the first beast,

the one whose lethal wound had been healed. ¹³He performed momentous signs, even making fire come down from heaven in front of people¹⁴and, by the signs he was permitted to perform on behalf of the beast, he deceived those who live on the earth. He told those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast who had been wounded by the sword, but still lived.¹⁵The second beast was empowered to give life to the image of the first beast so that it could speak, and could cause all those who did not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶He also caused everyone (small and great, rich and poor, free and slave) to obtain a mark on their right hand or on their forehead.¹⁷Thus no one was allowed to buy or sell things unless he bore the mark of the beast – that is, his name or his number.

¹⁸This calls for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the beast's number, for it is man's number, and his number is 666.

Father

As we study the lesson this week, remind us that you have given us our ears to listen. You have opened them to your words and we need to hear from you. Stir up within us the steadfast endurance and faith that you have put there. Show us how to remain true in the face of evil.

Amen

Monday

It takes a lot of courage to take on the world, particularly when you are its target (12:17). Consider today the form that this world power takes as it is described in chapter 13:1-11.

What did this beast look like?

How is his appearance similar to that of the dragon (cf. 12:1)?

The appearance of this beast and the dragon is nearly identical to a similar vision in *Daniel 7:2-8*.

Compare the features of these three:

| Quality | <i>Daniel 7:2-8, 19-22</i> | <i>Rev. 12:3-9</i> | <i>Rev. 13:1-8</i> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Point of Origin | | | |
| # of Beasts | | | |
| Kind of Beast | | | |
| # of Heads | | | |
| # of Horns | | | |
| Blasphemy? | | | |
| Actions against the saints | | | |
| Other | | | |

What is the relationship between “*the dragon*” and the “*beast coming up out of the sea*” (13:1-2)?

How much “*power*” and “*authority*” does the dragon have to give?

Tuesday

One key feature of this beast is that he has seven heads. What do the ‘*heads*’ represent (*compare 17:9-11*)?

How does this view fit what John writes, “I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed” (13:3)?

What does the fact that John repeats that the people “*worshiped*” the beast because the dragon “*gave his authority to the beast*” indicate about how we should apply this truth (13:4,8)?

Wednesday

How does he “*blaspheme against God*” (13:6)?

Who gave the beast his “*mouth*” and his “*authority to act*” (13:5)?

How are we to respond when others blaspheme you (cf. Matthew 5:10-12)?

If “*all those who live on the earth*” will worship the beast what will the world be like during this time (13:8)?

How are we to apply the message, “If anyone is meant for captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed by the sword, then by the sword he must be killed” (13:10)?

Thursday

John sees “*another beast coming up from the earth*” (13:11). This third beast (animal) is different from the other two.

What do you discern about the nature of this beast from his appearance?

What mainly does this beast do (13:12; 16:13)?

What is so significant about the first beast’s “*fatal wound [that] was healed*” (cf. 13:3)?

How is this false prophet able to deceive the people on the earth (13:13-15)?

What sin does he require of the people of earth (13:14)?

Who is the Antichrist?

This term does not appear at all in the Revelation. It might surprise you to know that it does not occur anywhere in the Hebrew scriptures nor in Christ's teachings. The term only occurs in 1 & 2 John and then only once to refer to *the* Antichrist (1 John 2:18;4:3). The other references are to people who are opposed to Christ (1 John 2:22; 2 John 7). But it is also clear that the early believers heard a lot about the coming Antichrist.

What other terms describe the coming Antichrist? In Daniel 9:26-27, he is referred to as *the prince who is to come*. In that passage, we discover that he is identified with the people who destroyed Jerusalem after Christ's crucifixion. This means that he is a Roman. Also revealed there is that he will make a covenant for "one week" (literally for one series of seven). When years are applied to this, we see that he will make a seven year covenant of peace with Israel sometime after the city of Jerusalem has been destroyed. At the half-way point (3 ½) he will break the covenant and put an end to worship in the temple. The Greek king, Antiochus, made the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem desolate when he offered a pig on the altar, but Jesus spoke of a future time when this desolation would occur (Matthew 24:15).

Paul spoke of this one as *the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, and the lawless one* (2Thessalonians 2:3, 8-9). There are now and always have been people who are characterized by living contrary to the laws of God. This one will be revealed before the Day of the Lord when he judges the earth (2:1). He will supplant all religions and claim worship for himself as God. He will establish himself (and/or his statue) in the temple. He will be energized by Satan and will do miracles, signs, and wonders (2:9). He will be able to deceive unsaved people into worshipping him and believing he is a god and not merely a man (2:10). We need to be careful of displays of power that are not also honoring to the one true God..

The Revelation refers to this same individual as *the beast out of the sea* (Revelation 13:1-2). The ultimate end of the Antichrist will be to be defeated by Christ and to be cast into the lake of fire for the millennium and for all eternity (Revelation 19:20; 20:10).

Friday

What is “*the mark*” of the beast and where is it placed (13:16)?

What practical value does the mark have (13:17)?

How do you see this working out with modern electronics and systems of commerce?

What happens to those who do not worship the beast or receive the mark (13:15,17)?

What happens to those who do worship and receive the mark of the beast?

Time to Choose (14:1-20)

14:1 Then I looked, and here was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were one hundred and forty-four thousand, who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²I also heard a sound coming out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. Now the sound I heard was like that made by harpists playing their harps,³ and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one was able to learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth.

14:4 These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from humanity as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb,⁵ and no lie was found on their lips; they are blameless.

14:6 Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, and he had an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth – to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷He declared in a loud voice: *“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has arrived, and worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water!”*

14:8 A second angel followed the first, declaring: *“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great city! She made all the nations drink of the wine of her immoral passion.”*

14:9 A third angel followed the first two, declaring in a loud voice: *“If anyone worships the beast and his image, and takes the mark on his forehead or his hand,¹⁰ that person will also drink of the wine of God's anger that has been mixed undiluted in the cup of his wrath, and he will be tortured with fire and sulfur in front of the holy angels and in front of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke from their torture will go up forever and ever, and those who worship the beast and his*

image will have no rest day or night, along with anyone who receives the mark of his name." ¹²This requires the steadfast endurance of the saints – those who obey God's commandments and hold to their faith in Jesus.

^{14:13}Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this:

'Blessed are the dead, those who die in the Lord from this moment on!'"

"Yes," says the Spirit, "so they can rest from their hard work, because their deeds will follow them."

^{14:14}Then I looked, and a white cloud appeared, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man! He had a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵Then another angel came out of the temple, shouting in a loud voice to the one seated on the cloud, *"Use your sickle and start to reap, because the time to reap has come, since the earth's harvest is ripe!"* ¹⁶So the one seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

^{14:17}Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸Another angel, who was in charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to the angel who had the sharp sickle, *"Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes off the vine of the earth, because its grapes are now ripe."* ¹⁹So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the grapes from the vineyard of the earth and tossed them into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰Then the winepress was stomped outside the city, and blood poured out of the winepress up to the height of horses' bridles for a distance of almost two hundred miles.

Father,

We ask you to give us insight into what this chapter is telling us about the end. Give us the faith that we need to persevere in our faith and in obedience to You in spite of all that the world throws at us. Impress upon us the nature of the coming judgment.

Amen

Monday

Just as chapters 12 and 13 contain some very bad news for believers during the Tribulation (12:17; 13:9-10,15), 14:1-6 contain some very encouraging news.

What is the significance of where the Lamb is standing and who appears there with Him?

Mt. Zion is an alternative name for Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:7; Psalm 2). In the New Testament, this is occasionally used to picture heaven (Galatians 4:25-27; Hebrews 12:22-23).

Do you think John is referring to the heavenly or earthly city of Jerusalem? Why?

Why do they have the names of the Father and Son “written on their forehead?” (7:3; 9:4; 13:16)

What is the significance of the “new song” (5:9; 14:3; Psalm 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isaiah 42:10)?

Why do you think they are the only ones who could learn the new song?

How does this vision encourage or challenge you?

Tuesday

These 144,000 Jewish believers (also in 9:4; 14:1-5) are referred to as “*first fruits to God and to the Lamb.*”

In light of what is taught in *Jeremiah 31:27-28* and *Romans 11:25-32*, what does the idea of first fruits convey?

When John says that the 144,000 “*have not been defiled with women*” (14:4), do you think John is literally referring to celibates or symbolically referring to purity here (cf. *2 Corinthians 11:2*)? Why?

To what extent are you reserved for God (cf. 14:4 with *James 1:18*)?

Why does John point out “*no lie was found in their mouth*” (14:5)?

Could it be said of you, “in his/her mouth no lie was found?”

What would it take for you to become a faithful witness for the Lord?

Wednesday

Three angels now present truths that believers living in those evil days need to remember. The first angel's message is described as the "*eternal gospel*" (14:6).

What is the content of the first angel's message?

Why is this message good news?

How does the second angel's message coincide with the first angel's message (14:8)?

Who or what is "Babylon the great"?

What is the third angel's message (14:9-11)?

What things are characteristic of the saints (14:12)?

Thursday

In 14:13 we encounter the second beatitude in the Revelation. The first beatitude (blessing) is found in 1:3.

Explain in your own words what you think this second beatitude means (14:13).

What is the word “rest” a picture of?

What lessons for the church in our day do you see in the four prophecies of 14:6-13?

Friday

The final section of this chapter deals with the carrying out of God’s judgment upon the earth.

What is significant about “sitting on the cloud” (14:14; compare Daniel 7:13-14)?

Why is this character called “one like a son of man?”

What does the “golden crown” and “sharp sickle” signify (Joel 3:13; Mark 4:29)?

How do the angels participate in the reaping of the harvest (14:17-20)?

How ripe for judgment do you think the earth is now? Why?

Do you think the bloodbath in 14:19-20 is literal? Why or why not?

Ken Easley says,

“No earthly wine vat ever produced a flow that high off the ground (perhaps four feet). This river of blood is clearly the language of vision, hyperbole, and nightmare.¹

Walvoord believes the distance of 180 miles might be literal, but the blood reaching the horse’s bridle is not.

Patterson contends,

The violence of the carnage of this bloodbath, which appears to be a reference to the battle of Armageddon, is such that blood like juice overflowing a winepress is spattered everywhere even as high as horses’ bridles.²

¹ Kendell H. Easley, *Revelation*, vol. 12 of *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 257.

² Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 297.