

FBS “When All of Hell Breaks Loose on Earth—Satan’s Fall from Heaven & Persecution of the Church”  
Joel Breidenbaugh (Revelation 12:7-17) 3-8-15

**Intro.** When we talk about the devil or Satan today, I like what the American Puritan Cotton Mather said, “That there is a devil is a thing doubted by none but such as are under the influence of the Devil.” We are in chapter 12 of Revelation in our series “When All of Hell Breaks Loose on Earth” & today we look at “Satan’s Fall from Heaven & Persecution of the Church.”

Theme: Salvation history & Satan’s work

Background: In light of the first few verses of Revelation 12, we know the woman is Israel, the great red dragon is Satan & the male Child is Jesus Christ. Each of those figures will make other appearances throughout this chapter. I believe chapters 12-14 highlight the Great Tribulation, the final 3 ½ years before Christ’s return, as it focuses on the work of Satan, the Antichrist & the false prophet.

➤ Let me give you two big truths & a few related truths from this text.

### **I. Watch Out for Satan (12:7-10, 12-17)**

- While in heaven, Satan is primarily referred to as the great red dragon (depicting his desire for war) but on earth, he is primarily referred to as the serpent (cf. Genesis 3)

#### **A. His fall led to man’s fall (12:7-9)—cf. Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28; Genesis 3**

- Some scholars believe this is a future reference to the fall of Satan which begins the Great Tribulation, but I believe it may be his original fall before Genesis 3 (see 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28—the lamentations on the kings of Tyre & Babylon say more than can adequately be said, even granting poetic license, about those two earthly kings; the text goes beyond the earthly monarchs to the power that stands behind them—Patterson, 263), as the vision hits instant replay
- But it may refer to Satan no longer being allowed to accuse believers (cf. Job 1-2; Zechariah 3:1) after Christ rose from the dead & re-entered heaven as our Advocate with the Father (cf. 1 John 2:1-2; Romans 8:31-34)—this latter view goes along with the proclamation in v. 10

#### **B. He’s a deceiver (12:9)**

- The word “devil” means to divide, deceive—he aims to blind people to the truth of the good news of Jesus (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:4)
- Even the flood of v. 15 probably refers to a flood of deception

Illus: The reference to spitting out water like a flood probably refers to Satan’s “stream of lies, delusions, religious ‘isms,’ philosophical falsehoods, political utopias, quasi-scientific dogmas” throughout church history (Hendricksen in Gregg, *Revelation: 4 Views*, 329)

#### **C. He’s an accuser (12:10)**

- Satan is the king of slander, misrepresentation & false accusations—he can take part of the truth & twist it & because he is also a deceiver, he can deceive others into doing the same thing

Illus: As a pastor, I have lots of friends & I’m very thankful for them. But I also have some enemies, people who don’t like me or what I stand for, and I’m okay with that, because the Lord had enemies. But there’s another group that’s especially hard on me & they’re my frenemies—they act like friends to my face but when I turn around they backbite & accuse & gossip & prove to be enemies (thus, they are frenemies)—just as Satan falsely accuses, people will sometimes be deceived & listen to Satan & falsely accuse others

#### **D. He’s a persecutor of Israel & the Church (12:12-17)**

- The name “Satan” means “adversary,” for he is at enmity with God & His people
- If Satan cannot attack the Woman’s Son (Jesus), then he can hurt the Son through the mother (Israel) & her other offspring (the Church)

Illus: When you consider persecutors of Israel & the Church today, you immediately think of the Muslim extremists & the Taliban & ISIS

- “his time is short”—compared to eternity & the previous era, Satan’s rule over the earth is ticking down quickly

## **II. Rejoice in the Lord (12:10-12)**

### **A. He has defeated Satan (12:10-11)**

- Satan’s defeat is highlighted in this chapter by the fact his being “thrown down” occurs 5x (12:9 [3x], 10, 13)

**Illus:** Do we have any world wrestling fans out there? Back in the 80s & 90s during WWF’s most glorious days, Hulk Hogan had many great bouts & wins, but one guy he never pinned was Rowdy Roddy Piper—he got a few wins over him, but never pinned him (even in the War to Settle the Score in 85)—unlike Hogan vs. Piper, the Lord has dominated Satan in every way imaginable & defeated him decisively

- Satan is also presented as a 5-time loser—he tried to devour the male child but God snatched Him up to His throne (12:5), Satan fought Michael but lost (12:9), the dragon pursued the woman but God prepared a place for her (12:6, 14), the serpent tried to drown the woman but the earth swallowed up the water (12:15-16) & Satan waged war against the woman’s offspring, but those who keep the commandments of God & testimony of Jesus conquer Satan by the blood of the Lamb & their testimony (12:11, 17)

### **B. He brings victory to sinners (12:10-12)**

#### **1. Via salvation (12:10)**

- God’s salvation of His people & power over sin & death & His kingdom have been established through the authority of Christ by His death & resurrection

#### **2. Via deliverance through death (12:11-12)**

- Sinners are cleansed by the blood of Christ (cf. 7:14) & their testimony (faith in Christ’s work)
- Even though their faith in Christ may mean their death, God is faithful to deliver them

### **C. He protects His people (12:14-16)**

- Some end-times gurus say the reference to the “two wings of the great eagle” given to the woman is a reference to the United States helping Israel in her time of need. While that interpretation is possible, it isn’t probable, because the “wings of an eagle” most likely refer to God’s general deliverance & protection of His people, as seen in God’s rescuing Israel from Egypt (Exodus 19:4)
- “a time, times and half a time” (12:14)—from Daniel 7:25; 12:7 (same as 42 months [Revelation 11:2; 13:5] & 1,260 days [11:3; 12:6])

**Conc.** Writing in *Moody Monthly*, Carl Armerding recounted his experience of watching a wildcat in a zoo. “As I stood there,” he said, “an attendant entered the cage through a door on the opposite side. He had nothing in his hands but a broom. Carefully closing the door, he proceeded to sweep the floor of the cage.” He observed that the worker had no weapon to ward off an attack by the beast. In fact, when he got to the corner of the cage where the wildcat was lying, he poked the animal with the broom. The wildcat hissed at him and then lay down in another corner of the enclosure. Armerding remarked to the attendant, “You certainly are a brave man.” “No, I ain’t brave,” he replied as he continued to sweep. “Well, then, that cat must be tame.” “No,” came the reply, “he ain’t tame.” “If you aren’t brave and the wildcat isn’t tame, then I can’t understand why he doesn’t attack you.” Armerding said the man chuckled, then replied with an air of confidence, “Mister, he’s old—and he ain’t got no teeth.” (*Our Daily Bread* in sermonillustrations.com)—Because of Christ’s work, Satan is being de-clawed & de-fanged, but you must set your hope in Christ & the blood of the Lamb to be saved.