

## The Woman and the Dragon, and Two Beasts

### Revelation 12-13

**MPS** Jesus is the Christ who shed his blood to conquer Satan and all who are saved by faith are eternally secure in Him.

**OBJ** Every person should trust in Jesus to be sealed by Holy Spirit because of THREE TRUTHS and ASSURANCES that anchor our soul.

**INTRO** Have you ever been to a scary movie and once you left had to convince yourself, or someone else, that it wasn't real? Well, today is a scary movie of a category all its own. But my intent is to convince and assure you that as a follower of Jesus Christ, you can walk confidently by faith.

We are still in the Interlude learning more and more details about that period known as the great tribulation. Today we gain some background understanding by a struggle in the heavenlies that stands behind all that transpires on the earth. We say we want to know what's going on, and here God provides it.

Jesus is the Christ who shed his blood to conquer Satan and all who are saved by faith are eternally secure in Him.

**TRANS** Revelation 12 is not "a foretelling of history but a representation of the struggle in the spiritual world which lies behind history." "This is the background for the final eschatological persecution of the church by the Antichrist, which is elsewhere called the great tribulation (see on 7:14). This chapter, in other words, embodies a surrealistic word-picture which describes the spiritual struggle standing behind historical events."<sup>1</sup> Revelation 12 begins with three battles.

#### Revelation 12:1-6

*And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup>She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. <sup>3</sup>And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. <sup>4</sup>His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. <sup>5</sup>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, <sup>6</sup>and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.*

[.1-6] **The first battle is between a woman and a red dragon.** The woman is introduced as a great sign with a description that establishes both her dominion and royalty.<sup>2</sup> She is pregnant and crying out in pains and agony of birth. She is not an actual person, though, but a representation of the messianic community from which the Messiah would be born.<sup>3,4</sup> Another great sign appears(.3) as a great red dragon. His description is also ornate with seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems, crowns, on his heads. He is called the ancient serpent, the accuser, the devil, or Satan (12:3, 9–10, 12; 20:2). His red color alludes to his character of violence, which draws on the Old Testament idea that serpents and sea monsters represent evil forces generally. He is God's archenemy, the accuser and tempter of God's people, and the deceiver of the world. His tail is so great that he sweeps down one-third of the stars of heaven and casts them to earth. And he stands before the woman about to give birth to devour the child. The woman gives birth to a male child who will rule all the nations with a rod of iron. And as she gives birth the child is caught up to God and His throne, and the woman flees into the

<sup>1</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 166–167.

<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 232. Mounce notes, "The moon beneath her feet (perhaps as a footstool) speaks of dominion, and the crown of twelve stars depicts royalty."

<sup>3</sup> J. Scott Duvall, [The Heart of Revelation: Understanding the 10 Essential Themes of the Bible's Final Book](#) (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2019). Duvall states, "'A symbol representing the community of faith that gives birth to the Messiah—the faithful remnant within Israel (12:1–2).'"

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), 231. Mounce notes "Although the woman gives birth to the Messiah, she is not to be understood as Mary the mother of Jesus but the messianic community, the ideal Israel."



wilderness to a place prepared by God for 1,260 days. In this first battle John provides a vivid picture by great signs of a “spiritual reality” in Heaven beyond our sight.<sup>5</sup> A battle in heaven “which in turn has consequences for the earthly experience of the church.”<sup>6</sup> This scene captures the whole scope of Jesus’s ministry and work from birth to ascension, and Satan’s impotence to hinder it. And we note again that the woman is protected by God and nourished for that distinct period of time. What we see here is not a next event, but one that transpires just prior and leads to the great tribulation. [In the first war the red dragon tries to kill the Son of God, but he fails.](#)

### Revelation 12:7-12

*<sup>7</sup>Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup>but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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!”*

[.7-12] **The second war erupts between the dragon and Michael the angel.** Michael, the archangel, and his angels come out to fight the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back but their fate was the same, they were defeated. This verified that there was no longer any place for them in heaven, so the great dragon and his angels were thrown down to earth. Then John heard a loud voice in heaven. The voice announces that the Kingdom of our God has come. And, the great dragon, who is here identified as the accuser, is no more. But of greatest significance is the means by which the war was won, “*by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.*” Here we see the centrality of Jesus’ atonement and the faithful witness of His followers in the supreme battle. The blood of Jesus expels the accusations of Satan, and the testimony to His blood declares that they are heard no more. “Christ defeated Satan on the cross (12:5). On the basis of that victory, Michael and his angels defeated Satan in pitched battle and drove him from the heavenly field (12:7–9). Salvation has come in the sense that all grounds of satanic accusation have been removed by Christ’s death on the cross, demonstrating God’s power, the righteousness of his kingdom, and the authority of Christ.”<sup>7</sup> [In the second war the great red dragon fights God’s angels, but he is defeated and falls to earth with his angels.](#)

### Revelation 12:12-17

*<sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>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. And he stood on the sand of the sea.*

[.13-17] The third war erupts on the earth. The dragon pursues the woman who had given birth. But she was given two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness where she had provision and protection for “a time, and times, and half a time.” Again, this is a reference to the same period as 42 months and 1,260 days during the great tribulation. The serpent poured out a river from his mouth to sweep her away, but the earth swallowed it up. The

<sup>5</sup> J. Scott Duvall, [Revelation](#), 160–161. “John refers to the “great sign” of the woman (v. 1) and the “sign” of the dragon (v. 3), indicating that he is communicating spiritual reality through symbols (like the “signs” in John’s Gospel) and that the woman is superior to the dragon.”

<sup>6</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#), 167.

<sup>7</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., [Preaching the Word: Revelation—The Spirit Speaks to the Churches](#), ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 252–253.



dragon grew furious and went off to wage war on those who keep God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

**The war of heaven is the war that has come to earth.** The persecution of the church is the same as the pursuit of the woman.<sup>8</sup> And the outcome shall be the same too; that as God protected and provided for her, so He shall for her offspring. And while John shows the rage of the dragon, he continually reminds of the shelter of God's promise. God provides and protects His people.<sup>9</sup> While Christians will experience persecution, we will not be defeated nor destroyed. Satan wants to accuse us before God, but Jesus has silenced him. He pursues us, but God carries and sustains us. Satan makes war on us, but the outcome here shall be as it was in heaven, a third strike and he is out. As ominous as John describes the great dragon Satan, he is a failure and a defeated foe. He will strike, but his head shall be crushed. Satan's lies, accusations, and assaults are impotent to injure any one of God's people because he has been defeated by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the word of testimony to His blood. *In the third war, the dragon grows furious to make war against God's people.*

**TRANS** What we learn today is some of the hardest truth we will ever have to hear, but we must be careful to hear the whole truth.

**OBJ TRUTH #1 and an Assurance that anchors our soul.**

**Truth 1: Christ conquered Satan by the blood of His cross and Christ-followers overcome by faithful testimony to Jesus' cross, but Satan pursues Christians as their adversary. [12:11]**

Revelation 12 reveals the heart of the whole book, from its message to its purpose. We are not alone in this war. God is neither absent nor ignorant of our struggle and our suffering. He is working, protecting and providing to bring the same victory to us that has already been won in Heaven. We need to understand who we are, a people journeying in the wilderness, but headed for the promised land. And though we will suffer persecution, we will not be defeated. We will surely undergo tests and trials to see if we love the Lord more than our own life itself, just as those who have gone before did. And even when it costs us our life, we will be victorious.<sup>10</sup> For, "it is better to die trusting Christ and clinging to the gospel than to go on living by denying that gospel. Better to die with the gospel than to live without it."<sup>11</sup> *No matter how strong Satan may appear he was defeated once and for all at the cross.*

**Assurance: Christ-followers overcome Satan by Christ's victory as we run to the truth of God's Word to bear a faithful testimony to Jesus' cross.**

**TRANS** Frustrated by failed efforts to destroy the heavenly woman and the Messiah, the dragon now directs his wrath against the church on earth. He takes his stand by the seashore to call forth his beast "who will be his primary instrument in the last persecution."<sup>12</sup>

## Revelation 13:1-10 **Beast One**

*And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. <sup>2</sup>And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. <sup>3</sup>One of its*

<sup>8</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., [Preaching the Word: Revelation—The Spirit Speaks to the Churches](#), ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 254. Hamilton states, "The word used to describe his pursuit of the woman (διώκω) is used elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Acts 7:52; 9:4; 22:4) to describe the persecution of the church, and that is probably what this pursuit symbolizes."

<sup>9</sup> J. Scott Duvall, [Revelation](#), 173. Duvall notes, "Another divine passive ("was given") emphasizes God's protective care for his people."

<sup>10</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#), 172–173. Ladd exhorts, "The background of martyrdom stands behind these words. They loved their Lord more than life itself and willingly suffered death rather than deny Christ. Jesus had said, "He who endures to the end [i.e., to the point of death] will be saved" (Matt. 24:13). Victory over Satan is not physical victory to be found in the preservation of life or escape from the persecution he wages against the saints. They stood fast in their testimony to Christ and loved not their lives even unto death. Their very martyrdom was their victory over Satan; it proved that his accusations against the brethren were empty. It is clear that victory over Satan is a spiritual victory which is often won even in the terrible experience of martyrdom."

<sup>11</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., [Preaching the Word: Revelation—The Spirit Speaks to the Churches](#), 253.

<sup>12</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#), 175.



heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. <sup>4</sup>And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

<sup>5</sup>And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup>It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup>Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, <sup>8</sup>and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. <sup>9</sup>If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

<sup>10</sup>If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes;

if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

**Revelation 13 introduces us to the "unholy trinity"**. The dragon standing on the sand of the seashore calls forth a beast from the sea with "with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads." The dragon is expanding his forces to increase his attack on people on the earth during this time of great tribulation. There is a fullness to the beast's power, and we will later learn that his horns represent ten kings.<sup>13</sup> He is lightning fast like a leopard, powerful to destroy like a bear's claw, and paralyzing like a lion's mouth. The beast is given its power, throne, and authority by the dragon. And most distinctively, it has a mortal wound on his head that had healed. The whole earth marveled at him as they worshiped the dragon and the beast.

**John describes the work of the beast.** He is given a mouth that is loud and commanding and filled with slanderous words. He is allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. His characteristic speech is to blaspheme God's name and dwelling, and those who dwell with Him. He is also allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them, and his authority extends over every tribe and people and language and nation. All earth-dwellers worship him, all whose names are not recorded before the foundation of the world in the Lamb's book of life. By John's switch to the future tense(.8) we learn that this worship will extend beyond only his time until the end of time.<sup>14</sup>

**This first beast is the false or anti-christ.** He is given Satan's authority and power to position himself in the place of Christ to be worshiped by all. His appearance, being, and work all mimic Christ, and attack the claims and followers of Christ while demanding His place of worship. Drawing from Daniel's vision(ch7) to describe the beast, we understand that this first beast represents "political, military, and economic power used in the service of Satan to oppose God and his people."<sup>15</sup> But most stunning of all is how effective he is in this work(.9). John concludes the introduction of the first beast by heralding a sobering reality; many of God's people will be taken captive and be slain.<sup>16</sup> [In response he ends with a call echoing over this reality for the faithful endurance by the saints.](#)

**OBJ TRUTH #2 and an Assurance that anchors our soul.**

**Truth 2: The false christ will deceive many earth-dwellers and attack God's people, but he is impotent to remove any name from the Lamb's book of life.**

Just as our Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the flesh for the higher glory of our salvation, so we His followers arm ourselves with the right thinking that we too will suffer in the flesh for His sake. Peter instructs Christians in this way when he says,

*"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup> so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God."* **1 Peter 4:1-2**

<sup>13</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#), 177. Ladd explains, "The seven crowns of the dragon represent the fullness of his power. The ten crowned horns of the beast represent ten kings (17:12); they do not, however, play a significant role in the vision of the beast."

<sup>14</sup> J. Scott Duvall, [Revelation](#), 181. "Duvall states, The switch to the future tense suggests the worldwide worship of the beast by unbelievers at the end of the age, worship deserved by the Triune God alone."

<sup>15</sup> J. Scott Duvall, [Revelation](#), 179.

<sup>16</sup> Robert H. Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), 253. Mounce clarifies this by saying, "The NIV correctly interprets the text in context to refer to those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (v. 8). In view of the impending persecution at the hand of the beast it is certain that captivity and death by the sword await those who faithfully follow the Lamb."





Suffering for the name of Jesus Christ is not something we seek out, but when we are persecuted for righteousness sake we consider it an honor because we know we rest in the full blessing of God.(Matt 5:10) And no matter how much suffering he may subject us to, he is powerless to separate us from God because of Christ Jesus. This is why Paul declares that even through hardship, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword, nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.(Romans 8:31-39)

**Assurance:** God's call is sufficient to source the saints' endurance for all persecution. The Lamb's book of life contains no eraser marks and there is no disappearing ink; written once in blood, a name recorded is a soul eternally secure.

## Revelation 13:11-18 **Beast Two**

*<sup>11</sup>Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup>It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. <sup>13</sup>It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, <sup>14</sup>and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. <sup>15</sup>And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. <sup>16</sup>Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, <sup>17</sup>so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. <sup>18</sup>This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.*

**A second beast rises from the earth.** He has two horns and spoke like a dragon. He has all the authority of the first beast, and his role is to make all earth inhabitants worship the first beast with the mortal wound that's been healed. He performs many great wonders and signs to deceive earth-dwellers. He instructs them to form images of the beast, and then makes the image speak and cause those who would not worship it to be slain. This beast marks all his followers on the right hand or forehead with a number identifying them with him. This provides security of commerce and trade for provision and protection in this world. John records that it calls for wisdom to understand and calculate the number of the beast, which is 666.

**The second beast is the false prophet who deceives.**<sup>17</sup> His alliance with Satan is to promote worship of the first beast, who through pagan religious power serves in alliance with the wickedness of the first beast.<sup>18</sup> This beast wields great power to perform miracles and signs under the banner of religion, to serve the first beast. And the alliance with political power is solidified by the distinguishing mark he places on his followers to identify them with the beast, 666. "In ancient times, letters of the alphabet served as numbers."<sup>19</sup> Most scholars agree that the number of the beast represents Nero in his day, but also holds greater meaning for all time. **The second beast, the false prophet, works to identify people with the antichrist.**

**Here we have the identity and work of what is known as the "unholy trinity";** who mimic and imitate real power that is God's alone to deceive people. And all this is in the end time, the great tribulation of the last climactic struggle between God and Satan.

**OBJ TRUTH #3 and an Assurance that anchors our soul.**

**Truth 3: The false prophet will deceive and mark many for destruction, but all who are sealed for God will overcome the mark for Satan.**

<sup>17</sup> Robert H. Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), 255. Mounce notes, "The beast out of the earth is a deceiver (cf. v. 14). Elsewhere he is uniformly called the false prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10)."

<sup>18</sup> J. Scott Duvall, [Revelation](#), 184–185. Duvall explains, "In truth, this beast is allied with Satan and promotes the worship of the first beast. Because of its religious role (i.e., the "false prophet" in 16:13; 19:20; 20:10), the second beast represents pagan religious power in service of wicked political/military/economic power structures and their leaders."

<sup>19</sup> Robert H. Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), 260.



The second beast manifests great power to awe and deceive people, and to draw their attention to worship the first beast. Once their attention is captured, the false promise of security and provision is established by a “mark” that signifies their identity with the devil. This mark is a “counter” to God’s seal that identifies those who are His. But one thing the false Christ and the false prophet cannot do is this, they cannot remove any name from the Lamb’s book of life nor remove the seal from any person. **Those who are recorded in the Lamb’s book of life and sealed in Christ by Holy Spirit will not be marked for Satan by the false prophet.**

**Assurance: The soul sealed by God’s Holy Spirit cannot be and will not be marked for Satan. They may die due to their faith, but they will overcome the “unholy trinity” by the power of the Triune God. God who recorded you and sealed you as His own is sufficient to sustain you for eternity. Satan won’t get you because God protects and provides for you.**

**Jesus is the Christ who shed his blood to conquer Satan and all who are saved by faith are eternally secure in Him.**

**CLOSE** We gain a lot of information about Satan in this passage, who he is, how he works, and what he is about doing even today. But let us not get so much information that we lose sight of the real message, that Christ is our victory and Satan a defeated foe.

There are two great warnings we must heed in this passage. Christians refuse to trust in worldly power through institutions and structures established by politics, economics, or military power to provide what only God has promised. And we reject the power of false religion, whether in images, authorities, ideologies, philosophies or pagan deities, or platform, that deceives by any of a myriad of demonstrations and manifestations, but contradicts God’s Holy Word. **The Christian’s hope rests only by faith in Jesus Christ crucified, buried, resurrected, ascended, and now seated on His Throne.**

Therefore, the question becomes, **“How does one know that their name is recorded in the Lamb’s book of life and that they are sealed by Holy Spirit?”** I offer **Four Guiding Questions** to know that your name is recorded in the Lamb’s book of life and that you are sealed by Holy Spirit.

1. **Have I responded to the gospel by placing my faith in Jesus Christ?** Those who believe to trust in Jesus and repent of their sins, are forgiven and cleansed to receive eternal life. Romans 10:9-13
2. **Am I listening to and living by the power of God’s Holy Spirit in me?** The seal of Holy Spirit guarantees one of our eternal hope, testifies to the truth of God’s Word by our conscience, by conviction, illumination for understanding and faith, and guiding counsel for righteous living. John 6:25-29; Romans 8:16; Hebrews 10:15-18; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:4:30
3. **Am I trusting in the promise of God’s Word?** Those who are saved in Christ rest only in the faithfulness of God to honor His Word to save. Romans 8:29-39; Hebrews 6:9-12; 10:19-25(.22)
4. **Am I bearing a faithful testimony to the cross of Jesus Christ in both the way I live (obedience by faith) and what I say (witness)?** God empowers by His Spirit all whom He has saved to live as a faithful witness in this world. Acts 1:8

