

## SATAN THE FRUSTRATED Revelation 12

Mauro Fiore. Mauro Fiore is the name of the man who won the Academy Award this past year for Best Cinematography- for his work on the movie *Avatar*. Cinematographers have a very important job- their job is to be the technical eye for the director. The director knows generally how he wants a scene to look, but he trusts the cinematographer to arrange the lighting and pick the film stock, the lens and the filters in order to realize the director's vision.

Camera angles are extremely important for a cinematographer- they sometimes film a person from a dozen different angles, and then use multiple angles to tell the story. This is how Revelation was written- different camera angles on the same scene. There are 7 different angles on the history between the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Christ and the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. We've already seen the 7 seals and the 7 trumpets. Now we get 7 symbolic histories between Revelation 12 and 14, starting with this story of a dragon and a woman.

Who is this Dragon? Well, we're told very plainly in verse 9 it's Satan. This chapter tells us about some of Satan's motivations and maybe more of his story than any other place in the Bible.

Let's examine this scene a little deeper. We're gonna ask 2 questions.

*1<sup>st</sup> question- Who is the object of the Dragon's hatred?*

To answer this question, we need to look at the identity of the woman? From her description it sounds like she's some new-age symbol- 'clothed with the sun, moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars on her head.' But she's pregnant and she's in trouble. She's about ready to give birth- literally, her feet are in the stirrups- and the devil is waiting there to devour her baby.

Now, since it's very obvious that this child is Jesus Christ, Roman Catholics claim that this is the Virgin Mary, but the much more likely understanding is that the woman is the Church. The woman is said to be pursued and persecuted by the dragon. That description doesn't fit Mary, but it does fit the Church. And when I say 'the Church'- I mean 'the people of God in every age,' the historical Church which includes Israel. In fact, back in Gen. 37 a young man named Joseph had a dream: "the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." Of course, Joseph was the 12<sup>th</sup> star- and he and his brothers who represent the 12 tribes of Israel make up the crown of 12 stars.

The Church is the queen of heaven. And to the Church God gave the Messiah, the child of promise. Certainly Mary was a part of that. But it fulfills another prophecy found in Genesis, doesn't it?

Anybody learn Genesis 3:15 (one of our Memory Marathon verses)? "I will put enmity between you and me, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise [or better translated: crush] your head and you shall bruise his heel." God is talking- who is He talking to there in the garden? A serpent. That's essentially what a dragon is, a large serpent.

And there is enmity. The Dragon hates the seed of the woman and wants to destroy him. Why? Because their futures are bound up together- the child is destined to be the destroyer of the Dragon.

And we see this enmity play itself out in Scripture as we trace the history of the seed of the woman from Eve to Mary:

The promise seems destined to die with Abraham, who is old, and Sarah, who is barren. Even after they conceive, the child of promise, Isaac, is almost killed before he can have offspring.

The promise again is in danger as Isaac's wife Rebekah is barren. However, God opens her womb & through Jacob the promise is alive.

In Jacob's offspring, the Israelites, the promise again is in jeopardy. When the Israelites make a golden calf, God tells Moses that He is going to kill them all. But, Moses intercedes for the people and the promise lives.

The promise is then given to the tribe of Judah to a young shepherd named David. But, the devil incites Saul to throw his spear at David to try to kill him and end the Messiah's line. Saul misses.

During Queen Athaliah's reign, she tries to kill off the royal seed. "But Jehosheba...took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes...so he was not killed." (II Kings 11).

In the book of Esther (fifth century B. C.), the king of Persia issued a command to wipe out the Jews. But God used a resourceful young woman to save His people and His promise.

Finally, when Christ is born, King Herod intends to kill the baby prophesied to be king. But God warns Joseph in a dream and they flee to Egypt.

How desperately Satan tried to prevent Jesus from coming to earth and redeeming His people! But God is faithful to His promise and nothing can stop Him from His plan of saving the world. So Satan is frustrated because he can't destroy Jesus. The child of promise lives. So Satan turns his anger against the next best thing- the woman, who is the Church.

## *2<sup>nd</sup> question- Why does the Dragon turn on the woman?*

The short answer to that question is that Satan turns on the woman because he's lost the war with God and now wants to win a battle somewhere.

Verse 7 describes the war in heaven. But this war isn't started by the dragon- it's unleashed by heaven. The arch-angel Michael leads an army of angels against Satan and his forces. And the Dragon is thrown down- 5 times in these verses we're told that he is thrown down.

But we need to ask, when is the Dragon thrown down? Let's read these glorious verses 10 and 11: "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. 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."

The main weapon that God used to defeat Satan and his evil forces was the death and resurrection of Christ. The dragon is defeated by the blood of the Lamb. Now, you might ask, how does that work? How do you lose by killing your opponent? How can you be defeated when you spill all of His blood?

That's the mystery of the gospel. The gospel story is not like our human stories- God doesn't overcome by being stronger and more organized than His enemy. He

overcomes by laying down His life for His friends. As Pastor John Stott has said, “The victim was the victor, and the cross is still the throne from which he rules the world.”

And what does the blood of Jesus do for us? It protects us from the accusations of the Enemy. Satan loves to accuse God’s people, day and night he hurls accusations against them.

“Lord, she’s a liar, and he’s an adulterer. I’ve got plenty of witnesses and overwhelming forensic evidence. They’re guilty.

“Here, this Christian is full of pride and anger. Guilty.”

“There, that Christian doesn’t pray or read the Bible very often. They’d rather eat and watch TV than worship You. They don’t deserve mercy. They’re guilty.

“Guilty. Guilty. Guilty.”

And you know what? He’s right. Satan has an air-tight case. We are guilty. We don’t deserve to be in God’s heaven. We deserve God’s wrath.

And there’s only 1 answer we have- only 1 answer that you can give: “I plead the blood of the Lamb. I was guilty, but the Lamb took my penalty. I was stained with sin- but the blood of Jesus cleansed me. The only defense I have is the Lord Jesus.”

We have a song that we sing here at Grace, called “Before the Throne of God Above.” Listen to these words:

“Before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea

A great High Priest whose name is Love

Who ever lives and pleads for me

My name is graven on His hands, my name is written on His heart,

When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within

Upwards I look and see Him there, who made an end to all my sin

Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free

For God, the Just, is satisfied, to look on Him and pardon me.”

Because of Jesus Christ and our attachment by faith to Him, *no one* can accuse us!

If Satan can’t accuse your, no one can accuse you. Not your mother, not your neighbor, not your worst enemy, not even your preacher.

If somebody says, ‘You don’t deserve to go to heaven,’ you tell them, ‘You’re right, I don’t deserve to go to heaven. But because Jesus died for me, He’s forgiven my sins and is taking me there anyway.’

This is so huge for learning to be honest and admit our faults. I grow so tired of people who cannot admit that they’ve done something wrong. They shift the blame to someone else or they de-friend you. When you question them on something, they get angry- ‘How dare you question me!’

I get so tired of such people- until I remember that I’m one of those people sometimes. But the gospel frees us to be able to admit our failures.

You tell me I’m not good at my job and I’m not a good friend, and I’ll tell you that’s not the half of it- I’m resentful, lustful, judgmental and full of pride. But the blood of the Lamb covers me. None of your accusations- or Satan’s accusations- or even my own accusations- can condemn me. Because the blood of the Lamb has rendered my verdict ‘not guilty.’

So say whatever you want about me- it doesn’t matter! In the end I’ll rejoice with heaven and earth in my salvation and the salvation of the whole Church.

Pastor Arturo Azurdia: “Satan’s attacks on the earth are driven by the fact that he knows that he’s already defeated.” He’ll flail about in his anger, and he’ll cause as much pain as he can. But he knows he can’t win. He can’t win because Jesus has already struck the decisive blow. In the death of Christ, we see the very death of death.

The Dragon is doomed to be forever frustrated in his attempts to destroy God and His church. And he will flail about in the death throes, trying to inflict as much collateral damage as he can, until he is thrown down for the last time. We’re coming to that; we’ll read about it in Revelation 20. And Satan knows it’s coming, and there’s nothing he can do about it.

Amen. Come Lord Jesus.