# When Faith Must Endure

*A Pastoral Journey Through the Revelation of St. John*

**Volume 5A**

**Randy Nielsen**

## A Note from the Author

This book grew out of a journey through the Revelation of St. John that began simply—with a desire to slow down and listen carefully to what John was saying.

Along the way, that study became something more.

In preparing When Faith Must Endure, I made extensive use of ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence system developed by OpenAI, which I came to call "Atlas." Atlas served as a research, writing, and editorial partner throughout the project. Our work together included exploring the historical and literary context of Revelation, examining Greek words and phrases, developing and testing interpretations, organizing the commentary, and refining the pastoral reflections found throughout these pages.

I believe it is important to acknowledge that contribution openly.

At the same time, the theological judgments, interpretations, editorial decisions, and final form of this work are my own. I reviewed, questioned, revised, accepted, or rejected the material developed through those conversations, just as I would material gathered through other research and study resources.

Artificial intelligence did not replace the study of Scripture. It became one of the tools used in that study.

Just as importantly, our purpose was never to turn these pages into an academic exercise or to give the reader the equivalent of a graduate degree in biblical studies. There are excellent scholarly works written for that purpose, and I am grateful for them.

Our purpose here is different.

We want to help people understand Scripture.

That is one reason these pages sometimes read more like a conversation than a traditional commentary. The shorter paragraphs, pauses, repeated phrases, and occasional sentences standing alone are intentional. They reflect the way we might talk about a passage if we were sitting together with an open Bible, stopping occasionally to say:

“Look at this.”
“Did you notice that?”
“Why would John say it that way?”
“And what might that mean for us?”

The scholarship still matters. Historical context matters. Language matters. Theology matters. Interpretive differences matter. We have tried to take all of those things seriously.

But the scholarship should serve the reader rather than become an obstacle between the reader and the text.

Perhaps the best description of the process is simply this:

There were many occasions when it felt less like a person asking questions of a computer and more like two people standing at a whiteboard, opening the Scriptures together and asking:

“What is Scripture really trying to tell us here?”
That is the experience I hope these pages provide for you as well.
Not simply reading an explanation of Scripture.
But joining the conversation.
Opening the Bible with us.
Stopping where something deserves another look.
Asking questions when something is difficult.
And occasionally sitting quietly with a truth before moving on.
Because ultimately the purpose of studying Scripture is not simply to know more about the Bible.
It is to hear what God is saying through it—
and then to ask what we will do with what we have heard.

*Scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV). Explanations and paraphrases in the commentary are the author’s own.*

# Dedication

**To my loving wife, Marilyn,**
who has always stood by me through good times and bad;
who is always seeking to know more about God and His Word;
and whose own desire to understand Scripture has encouraged me along the way.

I dedicate this book to her with love and gratitude,
and with the hope that this commentary may help her—and perhaps others as well—to better understand God's Word and to draw closer to the One who gave it to us.

# About the Author

Randy Nielsen began life as a sickly child. His mother prayed that if God would allow her son to survive, she would see that he received a proper Christian education. She kept that promise, making certain that Randy was in church nearly every Sunday and, as he grew, encouraging him to remain close to God.

Later in life, Randy felt God calling him into ministry—a calling he initially resisted. But, as Randy has sometimes observed, God does not take "No" particularly well.

In 2007, Randy finally answered that call. He entered the United Methodist Church's Local Pastor licensing program and became a Licensed Local Pastor. Over the next fifteen years, he served several church appointments, sharing the Gospel, caring for congregations, and helping some of the churches he served experience renewed growth.

During his years in ministry, Randy pursued graduate theological education at Asbury Theological Seminary, completing 54 credit hours toward the 96-hour Master of Divinity degree through online study. Ultimately, he decided that the time and financial commitment required to complete the degree were no longer practical. Content to serve as a vessel for God's Word as a Licensed Local Pastor, Randy continued ministering to the churches entrusted to his care.

Randy retired from pastoral ministry in 2022, but not from his love of Scripture or his desire to understand God's Word more deeply. That continuing journey eventually became *When Faith Becomes a Way of Life: A*

*Pastoral Journey Through the Epistle of James*. Now, that same journey has led him into the Revelation of St. John and *When Faith Must Endure: A Pastoral Journey Through the Revelation of St. John*.

Today, Randy and his family regularly attend a Southern Baptist church, where he continues his lifelong journey of faith, study, and discipleship.

# Introduction

## When Faith Must Endure

There are books of the Bible that tell us how to live faithfully in the ordinary rhythms of life. The Epistle of James is one of them. James speaks directly and practically. Listen before speaking. Control the tongue. Do not show favoritism. Care for those in need. Do not merely hear the Word—do it. Pray. Be patient. Resist the pull of wealth and selfish ambition. Let the faith you profess become visible in the life you live.

James teaches us what **When Faith Becomes a Way of Life** looks like. Revelation asks a different question.

**What happens when living faithfully becomes costly?**

What happens when following Christ brings opposition rather than approval? What happens when compromise would make life easier? What happens when evil appears powerful, injustice seems to prosper, faithful people suffer, and God appears strangely silent?

What does the Christian need to know then?

That is where the Revelation of St. John speaks with extraordinary power. Revelation teaches us why faith that works must also become **faith that endures**.

## A Book Written for the Church

Few books of the Bible have generated as much fascination, disagreement, fear, speculation, and controversy as Revelation.

Its pages contain extraordinary images: lampstands and thrones, scrolls and seals, trumpets and bowls, angels and demons, a dragon, beasts, Babylon, Armageddon, a millennium, final judgment, a new heaven and a new earth, and a magnificent city in which God dwells with His people.

It is understandable that Christians have wanted to know what all of these things mean.

But somewhere along the way, Revelation has too often become primarily a book about predicting what happens next.

That is not the approach of this commentary.

Revelation is not primarily a timetable. It is not a codebook for identifying today's politicians, nations, wars, technologies, or headlines. It is not intended to frighten Christians into faithfulness. And it is not a puzzle in which the person with the cleverest interpretation wins.

Revelation is **pastoral Scripture addressed to Christians who need to know how to remain faithful when appearances suggest that faithfulness is not winning.**

That distinction matters.

John writes to churches living in the real world. They know pressure, temptation, compromise, suffering, uncertainty, and fear. From their earthly vantage point, the powers surrounding them can appear overwhelming.
Revelation pulls back the curtain.
It allows the Church to see earthly reality from a heavenly perspective.
The Lamb has not lost.
God has not surrendered His throne.
Evil has not escaped His judgment.
The suffering of the faithful has not been forgotten.
And the apparent victories of the powers opposed to God are not the end of the story.
Revelation therefore does more than tell Christians something about what will happen.
It tells Christians what they must know in order to remain faithful when the world around them gives them every reason to wonder whether faithfulness is worth the cost.

# The Revelation of St. John

Perhaps the most important thing we can remember as we begin is something Revelation tells us in its opening words.
This is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1, KJV).
Before we encounter the dragon, the beast, Babylon, the mark, the number 666, Armageddon, or the millennium, we encounter Jesus Christ.
That order matters.
The central figure of Revelation is not Satan.
It is not the Antichrist.
It is not the beast.
It is not Babylon.
It is not Rome.
It is not any modern nation, political leader, military alliance, economic system, or technological development.
The central figure is **Jesus Christ**.
He is the faithful witness.
He is the Lamb who was slain.
He is the risen Lord.
He walks among His churches.
He alone is worthy to open the scroll.
He conquers not by becoming like the powers of this world but through His faithful witness, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ultimate victory.
And His people are called to follow Him.
If our reading of Revelation becomes so fascinated with evil that Jesus Christ moves into the background, something has gone wrong with our reading.

# First, Hear Revelation as John's Churches Heard It

Revelation was written for us.
But it was not written first to us.
John addressed real Christian communities living in the first-century world. The seven churches of Asia Minor were not symbols floating somewhere in prophetic history. They were churches filled with real people facing real questions about worship, faithfulness, suffering, accommodation, economic pressure, false teaching, fear, and compromise.
Therefore, throughout this commentary we will follow a simple interpretive principle:
**First understand what John showed his original hearers. Then understand what it says to the Church in every generation. Only then consider questions about fulfillment.**
This does not eliminate prophecy from Revelation.
It protects prophecy from becoming detached from Scripture.
An interpretation that could have meant absolutely nothing to the Christians who first heard Revelation read aloud in their congregations deserves careful examination before we declare it to be John's intended meaning.
Their world matters.
Their struggles matter.
Their Scriptures matter.
And understanding them will often help us understand John's extraordinary visions.

# The World Behind the Vision

For that reason, we will occasionally step into the world in which Revelation was first heard.
We will visit Patmos.
We will consider the cities of Asia Minor.
We will examine Roman imperial culture, emperor worship, economic pressure, social exclusion, persecution, public religion, and the difficult choices confronting Christians attempting to remain faithful to Jesus Christ within that world.
But history will never become the destination.
Historical background is useful only when it helps us hear Scripture more clearly.
Our goal is not merely to reconstruct the first century.
Our goal is to understand why Revelation spoke so powerfully to Christians living there—and why it continues to speak to Christians now.

# An Old Testament World

Another principle will guide us throughout this journey.

Revelation may be the final book of the New Testament, but its imagination is saturated with the Old Testament.
Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and other portions of Scripture repeatedly stand behind John's language and imagery.
John often does not stop and tell us that he is drawing upon an earlier biblical passage.
He simply uses its language.
Readers unfamiliar with those echoes can easily encounter Revelation's imagery and search immediately for a modern equivalent.
But before asking what an image might resemble today, we should first ask:
**Where have we seen this before in Scripture?**
When Scripture provides the background for John's imagery, Scripture should be our starting point for understanding it.
Revelation did not emerge from the twentieth or twenty-first century.
It emerged from the biblical story.

# When Faithful Christians Disagree

We should also acknowledge something before beginning.
Christians have disagreed about Revelation for a very long time.
Faithful, serious, Bible-believing Christians have reached different conclusions concerning the seals, trumpets, bowls, Babylon, the beast, the mark of the beast, Revelation's chronology, Israel and the Church, the millennium, the timing of Christ's return, and many other questions.
We will not solve every disagreement.
Nor will we pretend they do not exist.
When substantial disagreement occurs, we will slow down.
We will examine the major interpretations.
We will ask what biblical evidence supports them.
We will consider their strengths and difficulties.
And whenever possible, we will distinguish clearly between:
**What Scripture actually says**
and
**what an interpreter concludes from what Scripture says.**
Those are not always the same thing.
There will be places where we reach a conclusion.
There may be places where one interpretation appears considerably stronger than another.
And there will almost certainly be places where the most responsible answer is:
**We do not know.**
There is no failure of faith in admitting that Scripture has not told us everything we would like to know.
We must never manufacture certainty merely because uncertainty makes us uncomfortable.

# Revelation and the Headlines

Every generation seems tempted to believe that it is the generation that has finally discovered the key to Revelation.

Wars begin.

Governments rise and fall.

New technologies appear.

Economic systems change.

Political leaders emerge.

Natural disasters occur.

International tensions increase.

And someone inevitably opens Revelation and announces:

**"There it is."**

Sometimes contemporary events may illustrate principles Revelation describes. Human empires still demand allegiance. Economic systems can still become instruments of injustice. Political power can still become idolatrous. Christians can still face pressure to compromise.

But resemblance is not proof of prophetic identification.

We will therefore resist the temptation to read the newspaper into Revelation.

Our task is not to make John's visions fit our headlines.

Our task is to allow John's visions to reshape the way Christians understand the world—including its headlines.

That is a very different undertaking.

# More Than a Timeline

We will also be cautious about assuming that Revelation unfolds as a simple chronological sequence.

John's visions sometimes appear to revisit events, themes, and conflicts from different perspectives. Heavenly scenes interpret earthly ones. Images expand upon earlier images. The same struggle may be viewed from another vantage point.

Therefore, when we encounter a vision, we will not automatically ask:

**"Where does this fit on the timeline?"**

Sometimes the better question may be:

**"What is John showing us about reality?"**

Those are not necessarily the same question.

Revelation gives us glimpses behind the visible world. It shows earthly suffering from heaven's perspective. It reveals the spiritual dimensions of worship, allegiance, evil, witness, judgment, and endurance.

And sometimes the point of a vision may be less about establishing when something happens than about revealing **what it means**.

# When the Chips Are Down

This brings us back to the pastoral heart of Revelation.

James teaches Christians how faith should shape ordinary life.

Revelation speaks when ordinary life becomes extraordinarily difficult.
When the chips are down, what should the Christian know?
Know that God is still on the throne.
Know that Jesus Christ is still Lord.
Know that the Lamb who was slain has overcome.
Know that evil may be powerful, but it is not eternal.
Know that suffering does not mean God has abandoned His people.
Know that faithful witness matters even when faithfulness appears unsuccessful.
Know that compromise is not victory simply because it makes life easier.
Know that death itself does not have the final word.
And know where the story is going.
Babylon falls.
Evil is defeated.
Death is destroyed.
Creation is renewed.
God dwells with His people.
And the Lamb reigns.
That is why Revelation can speak hope even while describing terrible things.
Its purpose is not to convince frightened Christians that they should become more frightened.
It is to tell frightened Christians why they can remain faithful.

# How Then Should the Church Live?

That will be the question to which we continually return throughout this commentary.
Not merely:
**What does this symbol mean?**
Not merely:
**When will this happen?**
Not merely:
**Which interpretation is correct?**
But eventually:
**How then should the Church live?**
Revelation repeatedly calls God's people to worship, witness, endurance, holiness, courage, discernment, and faithfulness.
It warns against idolatry and compromise.
It exposes the seductive nature of wealth and power.
It reminds Christians that earthly empires are temporary.
It insists that God alone deserves worship.
And it calls the followers of Jesus to remain faithful to the Lamb even when following Him carries a cost.

If we finish studying Revelation knowing considerably more about prophetic systems but no more committed to following Jesus Christ, we will have missed something essential.

## When Faith Must Endure

This will not be a journey in which every question receives a simple answer. Revelation is too rich, too deeply rooted in Scripture, too filled with imagery, and too historically debated for that.

There will be moments when we stop and examine a Greek word.

There will be moments when we travel backward into Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Exodus, or Genesis.

There will be moments when we enter the first-century Roman world.

There will be moments when we consider several interpretations and acknowledge that faithful Christians understand the passage differently.

There will be moments when we simply stand before the vision and allow its grandeur to speak.

But through all twenty-two chapters, one truth must remain before us:

**Jesus Christ is the center of Revelation.**

And one pastoral call must continually return:

**Remain faithful.**

Faithful when obedience is easy.

Faithful when obedience is difficult.

Faithful when the Church is strong.

Faithful when the Church appears weak.

Faithful when we understand.

Faithful when we do not.

Faithful when victory is visible.

Faithful when victory can only be believed.

James teaches us how **When Faith Becomes a Way of Life** looks like.

Revelation calls us to become a people whose **faith must endure**.

And so, before we attempt to understand beasts, bowls, trumpets, dragons, Babylon, or the mysteries of things yet to come, we begin where John begins: With Jesus Christ.

Because when everything else has passed away, the Lamb will still be standing.

# A Word About the Imagery of Revelation

Throughout *When Faith Must Endure*, we have deliberately resisted the temptation to turn the imagery of Revelation into a catalog of modern people, nations, technologies, weapons, or current events.

That is intentional.

When John describes locusts like horses prepared for battle, creatures rising from the sea, a woman clothed with the sun, Babylon, dragons, beasts, bowls, trumpets, and seals, our first question is not:

**"What does this resemble in our world?"**

Our first question is:

**"What was John communicating through this imagery to the people who first heard these words?"**

Revelation was written nearly two thousand years before our newspapers, political boundaries, military technologies, and modern institutions existed.

Yet the book was meaningful to the Christians who originally received it.

They were expected to hear it, understand its central message, and respond faithfully to what they heard.

That must matter to the way we interpret it.

So, we begin where they began.

With the Scriptures they knew.

With the symbols they recognized.

With the world in which they lived.

With the pressures they faced.

And above all, with the revelation of Jesus Christ that John was giving them.

This does not make Revelation irrelevant to the modern world.

It makes Revelation **more** relevant.

Because once we understand the enduring truth communicated through the imagery, we no longer have to force the symbols into one particular generation.

Empires still demand allegiance.

Power still tempts.

Deception still misleads.

Idolatry still competes for the human heart.

Evil still destroys.

Faithfulness still costs something.

The Church is still called to endure.

And Jesus Christ is still Lord.

Those truths belonged to John's churches.

They belong to us.

And should the Lord tarry, they will belong to Christians living generations after us.

We are therefore not attempting to make John's imagery predict our world.
We are attempting to allow John's imagery to speak from **his world into ours**.
There is an important difference.
The question is not merely:
**"Can we identify the locusts?"**
The deeper question is:
**"Can we remain faithful to the Lamb?"**
Because Revelation was never given merely to satisfy Christian curiosity about the future.
It was given to form faithful Christians in the present.
And that is why our approach throughout this journey will remain the same:
**We will first seek to understand the imagery in the manner in which it was originally written—and then allow its enduring truth to speak to the world in which we live.**

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# The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

## Revelation 12:1–6

**“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”**
— Revelation 12:1–6, KJV

Before the dragon—
there was the:
Covenant.
Before the conflict—
there was the:
Kingdom.
Before John shows us the enemy—
he has already shown us the:
Throne.
That matters.
Because Chapter 12 is about to take us behind what we have already:
Seen.
Behind persecution.
Behind suffering.
Behind kingdoms.
Behind the hostility directed toward God's:
People.
John is about to show us the deeper spiritual conflict behind the visible:
Conflict.
A woman.
A child.
A dragon.
And yet we enter this vision already knowing something the dragon cannot:

Change.
God:
Reigns.

## 1. “There Appeared a Great Wonder in Heaven”

John begins with:
A sign.
A great:
Wonder.
That word immediately gives us an important interpretive:
Guardrail.
John is showing us something through symbolic:
Imagery.
The symbols are not meaningless.
Nor are they invitations to unrestricted:
Speculation.
They point beyond themselves toward realities John wants us to:
See.
Our task is therefore not merely to ask:
What does every detail represent?
We must first ask:
What is John showing us through the whole:
Vision?

## 2. A Woman Clothed With the Sun

The first figure John sees is a:
Woman.
But there is nothing ordinary about her:
Appearance.
She is clothed with the:
Sun.
The moon is beneath her:
Feet.
A crown of twelve stars rests upon her:
Head.
The imagery communicates:
Glory.
Dignity.
Significance.
And immediately comes the question that has occupied interpreters for:
Centuries.
Who is the:
Woman?

## 3. We Should Leave Room Around the Woman

Several interpretations have been offered.

Some identify her particularly with:
Mary.
That connection is understandable because she gives birth to the male child who will rule the:
Nations.
Others understand her primarily as:
Israel—
the covenant people from whom the Messiah:
Came.
Still others understand her more broadly as representing the people of:
God.
There are reasons behind each of these:
Readings.
And the vision may be broad enough to contain more than one dimension of the biblical:
Story.
So we should resist making the woman smaller than John's imagery allows her to:
Be.

## 4. Mary Belongs Within the Picture

We should certainly not remove Mary from the:
Vision.
Jesus truly entered human history through a:
Woman.
Mary carried Him.
Mary gave birth to:
Him.
The incarnation happened within:
History.
But John's woman also seems larger than Mary's individual:
Biography.
Before the chapter ends, the dragon will wage war against the rest of her children—
those who keep God's commandments and hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
The woman therefore seems to participate in the larger story of God's:
People.

## 5. The Twelve Stars Point Us Toward God's Covenant Story

The woman wears a crown of:
Twelve stars.
Twelve is hardly an insignificant number in:
Scripture.

Twelve tribes.
Twelve apostles.
And the imagery of sun, moon, and stars naturally recalls Joseph's dream in:
Genesis.
We should again speak carefully.
An echo is not necessarily an exact:
Identification.
But the imagery places the woman firmly within the biblical story of God's covenant:
People.
This child does not appear without a:
Story.
He comes from within the long history of God's:
Promise.

## 6. The Woman Is Glorious—And She Is Suffering

The woman is clothed with the:
Sun.
Yet she cries out in:
Pain.
She is experiencing the agony of:
Childbirth.
Glory and suffering appear in the same:
Picture.
That should already sound familiar in:
Revelation.
God's purposes are moving toward fulfillment.
But fulfillment does not mean the absence of:
Pain.
The woman carries the promise.
And carrying the promise is:
Costly.

## 7. Then Another Wonder Appears

John sees another:
Sign.
But this one is very:
Different.
A great red:
Dragon.
Seven heads.
Ten horns.
Seven diadems.
The image is deliberately:
Terrifying.

This is not harmless evil.
Not cartoonish:
Evil.
Not something to be treated:
Casually.
The dragon is powerful.
Destructive.
And:
Dangerous.
But powerful is not the same as:
Sovereign.

## 8. The Dragon Is Not God's Equal

This is essential for understanding everything that:
Follows.
Revelation does not give us two equal powers fighting over the:
Universe.
God is not barely holding His own against:
Satan.
There is one ultimate:
Throne.
And the dragon is not sitting upon:
It.
The dragon possesses power.
But it is not unlimited:
Power.
He exercises authority.
But it is not ultimate:
Authority.
The dragon is frightening.
But he is not:
God.

## 9. The Dragon's Tail Sweeps the Stars

John says the dragon's tail sweeps a third of the stars of heaven and throws them to the:
Earth.
Interpreters have naturally asked what those stars:
Represent.
Fallen angels?
Heavenly beings?
Another symbolic expression of the dragon's destructive:
Power?
The passage itself does not stop to explain the stars:
Here.

So neither should we pretend that it:
Does.
What John unquestionably gives us is an image of enormous destructive:
Reach.
The dragon's rebellion leaves destruction behind:
Him.

## 10. Even Here There Is a Limit

Notice the fraction:
A third.
We have heard that language repeatedly through the trumpet:
Judgments.
A third.
Not:
Everything.
Once again Revelation shows us evil operating within:
Limits.
The destruction is real.
The danger is real.
But evil never receives:
Infinity.
God does.

## 11. The Dragon Stands Before the Woman

Then the vision becomes deeply:
Personal.
The dragon stands before the woman who is about to give:
Birth.
And he waits.
Not to welcome the:
Child.
To:
Devour Him.
The image is horrifying.
Life is about to appear.
And evil waits to destroy it the moment it:
Comes.
The conflict has suddenly narrowed from cosmic imagery to a woman, a child, and an enemy waiting to:
Kill.

## 12. The Dragon Has Always Opposed the Promise

The image resonates with the larger biblical:
Story.
Pharaoh ordered Hebrew sons:
Killed.

Threats repeatedly arose against the line through which God's promises would:
Continue.
Herod sought the child born in:
Bethlehem.
We need not turn each of these into an exact identification with John's:
Vision.
But together they reveal a recurring biblical:
Pattern.
God advances His redemptive purpose.
Evil attempts to:
Destroy it.

## 13. And the Child Is Born Anyway

This may be one of the simplest and most powerful truths in the:
Passage.
The dragon is waiting.
The dragon is watching.
The dragon intends to:
Devour.
And the woman gives birth:
Anyway.
The dragon's presence does not cancel God's:
Purpose.
The dragon's hostility does not prevent God's:
Promise.
Evil may oppose what God is doing.
It does not therefore control what God is:
Doing.

## 14. A Son Who Will Rule the Nations

John gives us the clue we need to identify the:
Child.
He will rule the nations with a rod of:
Iron.
The language reaches directly back to Psalm: 2
The Lord's Anointed.
The ruler before whom the rebellious nations cannot ultimately:
Stand.
This is:
Christ.
The child whom the dragon wants to devour is the Messiah destined to:
Reign.

## 15. The Nations May Rage—But the Messiah Will Rule

That connection is especially powerful coming directly from Chapter: 11

There the nations:
Raged.
Here the child is destined to rule the:
Nations.
The nations may resist.
The dragon may oppose.
Earthly powers may rebel.
But resistance does not determine the final:
Outcome.
The kingdom still belongs to God and His:
Messiah.

## 16. The Dragon Fails

The dragon has positioned himself carefully.
He is ready.
He is powerful.
He is waiting.
And he:
Fails.
The child is caught up to God and to His:
Throne.
The dragon intended:
Death.
John shows us:
Enthronement.
That is quite a:
Reversal.

## 17. John Compresses the Story

John moves astonishingly quickly.
Birth.
Then:
Throne.
He does not recount:
Nazareth.
Galilee.
The disciples.
The miracles.
Gethsemane.
Calvary.
The empty tomb.
The ascension.
Not because those things are:
Unimportant.
But because John is showing us the great movement of the:

Story.
The Messiah came.
The dragon could not destroy God's:
Purpose.
Christ now:
Reigns.

## 18. The Cross Has Not Disappeared

We should not mistake John's compressed account for an absent:
Cross.
Revelation has already shown us the:
Lamb.
Standing as though:
Slaughtered.
And before this chapter is finished, God's people will conquer through the blood of that:
Lamb.
The cross remains at the center of Christ's:
Victory.
John simply does not retell the entire Gospel story:
Here.
His concern is the outcome.
The child reaches the:
Throne.

## 19. The Woman Flees Into the Wilderness

With the child secure, attention returns to the:
Woman.
She flees into the:
Wilderness.
At first the wilderness sounds like a place of:
Danger.
Isolation.
Hardship.
And Scripture certainly knows wilderness that:
Way.
But Scripture also knows the wilderness as a place where God:
Provides.
Israel learned that.
Elijah learned that.
The wilderness may be difficult.
But difficult does not mean God is:
Absent.

## 20. A Place Prepared of God

This may be the quiet treasure of Verse: 6

The woman has a:
Place.
And that place has been prepared by:
God.
She does not stumble upon it by:
Accident.
God knows where she is:
Going.
Before the woman arrives—
God has:
Prepared.
Before the wilderness becomes necessary—
God has:
Prepared.
Before the dragon can pursue—
God has:
Prepared.

## 21. Sometimes Protection Looks Like Wilderness

That may not be how we normally imagine God's:
Protection.
We would prefer protection to mean:
No wilderness.
No danger.
No struggle.
No:
Fear.
But the woman is protected within the:
Wilderness.
God's protection does not always mean exemption from difficult:
Circumstances.
Sometimes it means His provision within:
Them.

## 22. She Is Nourished There

The woman is not merely:
Hidden.
She is:
Nourished.
God provides what she needs in the place where He has prepared for:
Her.
The wilderness may look barren.
But God is not limited by what the wilderness appears able to:
Provide.
Where God leads—

God can:
Sustain.

## 23. A Thousand Two Hundred and Threescore Days

And here we encounter a familiar:
Number.
1,260:
Days.
We saw precisely the same period in Chapter: 11
There it marked the period of the witnesses':
Testimony.
Here it marks the period during which the woman is nourished in the:
Wilderness.
The connection deserves careful:
Attention.
But our prophetic calculator remains firmly in the:
Drawer.
The passage has not invited us to select a date and start:
Counting.

## 24. The Wilderness Has a Limit

Whatever additional meaning the 1,260 days may:
Carry—
one thing is unmistakable.
The period is:
Limited.
The wilderness is not:
Forever.
The dragon is not given:
Forever.
Suffering is not given:
Forever.
God's kingdom:
Is.
Revelation keeps placing boundaries around the apparent triumph of:
Evil.

## 25. The Dragon Enters a Story He Cannot Rewrite

Put the entire scene:
Together.
The woman is part of God's:
Purpose.
The child is born according to God's:
Purpose.
The child reaches God's:
Throne.

The wilderness has already been:
Prepared.
The period has already been:
Measured.
The dragon is powerful.
But everywhere he turns, he encounters something God has already:
Established.
That may be the most important thing to see before we go any farther into
Chapter: 12
The dragon can oppose God's:
Purpose.
He cannot rewrite God's:
Purpose.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are times when life feels very much like this:
Vision.
Something precious is surrounded by:
Threat.
Something hopeful is accompanied by:
Pain.
Something God seems to be doing is opposed by circumstances we cannot:
Control.
And sometimes the road ahead leads somewhere we never wanted to:
Go.
Into the:
Wilderness.
Our first instinct may be to assume that wilderness means something has gone:
Wrong.
But Revelation 12 gives us another possibility.
The wilderness may contain a place God has already:
Prepared.
That does not make the wilderness pleasant.
It does not make suffering:
Imaginary.
It does not make the dragon:
Harmless.
It means the presence of difficulty is not proof of the absence of:
God.
The woman enters the wilderness.
And God is already:
There.
Sometimes faith endures until God changes the circumstances.

Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith discovers that before we ever arrived in the wilderness—
God had already prepared what we would need:
There.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon appears enormously:
Powerful.
Seven heads.
Ten horns.
Seven diadems.
A tail sweeping stars from:
Heaven.
He stands before a woman about to give birth and waits to devour her:
Child.
If we stopped the vision there—
the dragon would appear to have every:
Advantage.
But John does not stop:
There.
The child is:
Born.
The dragon cannot stop:
It.
The child reaches the:
Throne.
The dragon cannot stop:
It.
The woman reaches the place God has:
Prepared.
The dragon cannot stop:
That.
Revelation never asks us to pretend evil is:
Weak.
It asks us to remember that evil is not:
Ultimate.
The dragon may dominate the picture for a:
Moment.
But he does not determine how the story ends.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When something threatening dominates my field of vision, am I allowing the size of the dragon to become greater in my mind than the sovereignty of God?
When I find myself in a wilderness I did not choose, can I trust that God may already have prepared what I need there?
And when evil appears powerful, can I remember that temporary power is not the same thing as eternal rule?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:1

**“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:”**
— Revelation 12:1, KJV

And suddenly—
John sees a:
Woman.
But nothing about this woman is:
Ordinary.
She is clothed with the:
Sun.
The moon is beneath her:
Feet.
Twelve stars form a crown upon her:
Head.
And John tells us immediately that what he sees is a:
Wonder.
A sign.
Something that must be:
Seen—
but also:
Understood.
We have entered a portion of Revelation where symbols will become increasingly:
Important.
Woman.
Dragon.
Child.
Stars.
Wilderness.
Beasts.
Horns.
Crowns.
Numbers.
And perhaps before we take another step, Revelation 12:1 gives us exactly the interpretive reminder we:
Need.
A sign points beyond:
Itself.

## 1. “A Great Wonder”

John does not merely say:
“I saw a woman.”
He calls what appears:
A great wonder—the sign John describes in heaven.
The Greek word John uses is:
*Sēmeion.*
A:
Sign.
Something visible that communicates a reality beyond the image:
Itself.
That means John has given us an interpretive instruction before he has given us the:
Interpretation.
We should take the imagery:
Seriously.
But we should not necessarily take every image:
Literally.
The woman is being shown to John as a:
Sign.

## 2. Symbols Are Not the Opposite of Reality

Sometimes we hear the word:
Symbolic—
and assume it means:
Not real.
That is a:
Mistake.
Symbols can communicate realities too large or too complex to be expressed through ordinary:
Description.
A flag is cloth.
But it can represent a:
Nation.
A wedding ring is metal.
But it can represent a:
Covenant.
A cross can be wood.
But for Christians it carries the story of:
Christ.
Symbol does not mean:
Meaningless.
It means the image carries meaning beyond:
Itself.

## 3. Revelation Has Been Teaching Us This Language

This is not the first time Revelation has communicated through:
Symbols.
Lampstands represented:
Churches.
Stars represented:
Angels.
The Lamb represents:
Christ.
Incense represents the prayers of the:
Saints.
John has been teaching us how to read his visions from the:
Beginning.
Sometimes Revelation interprets its own:
Symbols.
Sometimes Scripture provides the:
Background.
And sometimes the wisest thing we can say is:
John does not tell us everything we would like to: Know.

## 4. “Appeared in Heaven”

The sign appears in:
Heaven.
Once again John's vision lifts our eyes beyond the immediately visible:
World.
Chapter 11 ended with heaven:
Opened.
The temple was:
Seen.
The ark of the covenant was:
Seen.
Now another heavenly scene appears before:
John.
That continuity matters.
We have not left the great conflict of Revelation.
We are being shown another dimension of:
It.

## 5. Chapter 12 Changes Our Perspective

Much of what we have seen so far has unfolded upon the:
Earth.
Empires.
Armies.
Persecution.
Death.

Judgment.
Witness.
But Chapter 12 begins pulling us behind those visible:
Events.
John is about to show us that the struggles experienced upon earth participate in a deeper spiritual:
Conflict.
There is more happening than human eyes can:
See.

## 6. First John Sees a Woman

The first figure in the vision is not the:
Dragon.
That is worth:
Noticing.
Before John shows us the enemy—
he shows us the:
Woman.
Before the threat—
the one who carries the:
Promise.
The dragon will enter the vision soon enough.
But evil does not receive the first:
Word.

## 7. "Clothed With the Sun"

The woman is clothed with the:
Sun.
John reaches for cosmic imagery to describe:
Her.
She is not merely standing beneath the:
Sun.
She is:
Clothed—
with it.
The image communicates extraordinary:
Glory.
Splendor.
Radiance.
She appears wrapped in something greater than:
Herself.

## 8. The Glory Does Not Necessarily Originate With Her

There may be an important distinction:
Here.
The woman is:

Clothed.
That suggests something she:
Wears.
Something surrounding:
Her.
Throughout Scripture, glory ultimately belongs to:
God.
So we should be cautious about treating the woman's radiance as though she possesses independent divine:
Glory.
She participates in a glory associated with God's:
Purpose.
She is clothed.

## 9. “The Moon Under Her Feet”

Then John looks beneath the woman's:
Feet.
There is the:
Moon.
Again the image is:
Cosmic.
Sun.
Moon.
Stars.
The heavens themselves seem gathered around this:
Woman.
The moon beneath her feet contributes to the picture of dignity and exalted:
Position.
This is no insignificant figure within the:
Vision.

## 10. “A Crown of Twelve Stars”

Upon her head is a:
Crown.
And the crown contains:
Twelve stars.
Now biblical echoes begin to:
Sound.
Twelve is deeply associated with the people of:
God.
Twelve tribes of:
Israel.
Twelve apostles of the:
Lamb.

Later Revelation will bring both of those twelves into the imagery of the New:
Jerusalem.
So twelve should immediately make us think in terms of God's covenant:
People.

## 11. Joseph's Dream Echoes in the Background

The combination of:
Sun.
Moon.
Stars.
Naturally recalls Joseph's dream in Genesis: 37
Joseph saw the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing before:
Him.
Within Genesis, the imagery becomes associated with Jacob's:
Family.
Israel.
That does not automatically mean we can place an equals sign between his dream and Revelation: 12
But the echo is difficult to:
Miss.
John's imagery speaks the language of Israel's:
Story.

## 12. Echo Is Not the Same as Identification

Here one of our familiar guardrails becomes:
Important.
Biblical imagery can echo an earlier passage without requiring every detail to correspond:
Exactly.
John frequently gathers imagery from different portions of Scripture and uses it within a new:
Vision.
So we should recognize the Genesis:
Echo.
Allow it to inform our:
Reading.
But resist forcing every element into a rigid interpretive:
Chart.
Echo helps us:
Understand.
It does not always provide a:
Name tag.

## 13. So Who Is the Woman?

And now we reach the question everyone eventually:

Asks.
Who is:
She?
Mary?
Israel?
The Church?
The people of God?
Christian interpreters have answered the question in different:
Ways.
And each interpretation notices something genuinely present within the:
Text.
Our task is not to pretend those differences do not:
Exist.
It is to ask which features of the vision each interpretation is trying to:
Explain.

## 14. Mary Cannot Simply Be Removed

The woman will give birth to the male child who rules the:
Nations.
That child is clearly:
Christ.
And historically Jesus was born of:
Mary.
So Mary naturally belongs within the:
Picture.
The incarnation did not happen symbolically.
A real woman carried Jesus in her:
Womb.
A real woman gave birth to:
Him.
Mary's place within the story cannot simply be:
Erased.

## 15. But the Woman Appears Larger Than Mary Alone

As Chapter 12 unfolds, the woman will continue in the vision beyond the birth of the:
Child.
She will flee into the:
Wilderness.
She will be:
Protected.
And the dragon will eventually make war against the rest of her:
Children—
those who keep God's commandments and hold the testimony of:
Jesus.

The imagery therefore seems to expand beyond the biography of one:
Woman.
John appears to be showing us something larger.

## 16. Israel Is Deeply Present in the Image

The Genesis imagery.
The twelve stars.
The birth of the:
Messiah.
All naturally direct our attention toward:
Israel.
Jesus came from within Israel's:
Story.
The covenant.
The promises.
The patriarchs.
The prophets.
David.
The long expectation of the:
Messiah.
Paul would later remind the Roman Christians that from Israel, according to the flesh, comes the:
Messiah.
The child of Revelation 12 emerges from that covenant:
Story.

## 17. The People of God May Be the Larger Picture

Perhaps the woman is best understood not as a photograph of one individual but as a symbolic portrait of the people through whom God's redemptive purpose is carried:
Forward.
Israel stands within that:
Portrait.
Mary stands within that:
Portrait.
And as the chapter develops, those who belong to Jesus also appear within that continuing:
Story.
The image may therefore be intentionally:
Corporate.
One woman representing a people.

## 18. We Do Not Have to Make the Image Smaller

Sometimes interpretation becomes an attempt to force a symbol into one:
Box.
It must be:

Mary.
Or:
Israel.
Or:
The Church.
But biblical symbols can carry layers of:
Meaning.
The woman may embody the covenant people of God while necessarily including Mary as the particular woman through whom the Messiah actually:
Came.
We do not need to flatten the image in order to:
Understand it.

## 19. The Woman Is Defined by Her Relationship to God's Purpose

Perhaps this is the safest place to stand at Verse: 1
Before John tells us her:
Name—
he shows us her place within God's:
Purpose.
She carries the story that will bring forth the:
Messiah.
Her significance is not independent of:
God.
Her glory is connected to what God is doing through:
Her.
That may matter more than satisfying every question about her precise:
Identity.

## 20. The Crown Is a Crown of Victory

The word John uses for crown is:
*Stephanos.*
A victor's:
Crown.
Not merely royal decoration.
The woman appears within the vision already bearing imagery associated with:
Victory.
And yet in the very next verse she will cry out in:
Pain.
That combination is profoundly:
Revelatory.
Victory and suffering can exist within the same:
Story.

## 21. Glory Does Not Mean the Absence of Suffering

Verse 1 presents a glorious:
Woman.
Verse 2 will present a suffering:
Woman.
Same:
Woman.
That matters.
We often imagine that God's favor should remove all:
Pain.
Revelation repeatedly teaches us:
Otherwise.
Those who belong to God may be:
Glorious—
and still:
Suffer.
Known—
and still:
Struggle.
Victorious—
and still be called to:
Endure.

## 22. The Sign Is "Great"

John does not call every image:
Great.
This one is.
A great:
Wonder.
Something of enormous significance is being:
Shown.
The woman stands at the intersection of:
Promise.
Covenant.
Messiah.
Conflict.
And the people of:
God.
The story John is about to tell reaches far beyond one moment in:
History.

## 23. Before We See the Dragon, Look at the Woman

We know what is coming.
The dragon will appear in Verse: 3
And dragons have a way of capturing our:

Attention.
But John gives us two verses before the dragon ever enters the:
Scene.
First:
The woman.
First:
The promise.
First:
The people through whom God is bringing His purpose toward:
Fulfillment.
Perhaps Revelation is already teaching us where to place our:
Eyes.

## 24. The Enemy Is Never the Beginning of the Story

This is important.
Satan did not invent the:
Story.
Evil did not create the:
World.
The dragon does not establish the:
Promise.
He enters something God is already:
Doing.
That means evil is always:
Secondary.
Reactive.
Oppositional.
God's purpose comes:
First.

## 25. A Sign of Something Larger

Verse 1 does not answer every question we might:
Ask.
It does something more:
Important.
It introduces us to a woman whose identity is woven into the entire story of God's redemptive:
Purpose.
She is glorious.
Covenantal.
Cosmic.
And soon—
she will:
Suffer.
Soon—

the dragon will:
Appear.
Soon—
the child will be:
Born.
But before any of that happens, John gives us the:
Sign.
God has been writing this story far longer than the dragon has been trying to:
Destroy it.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are times when the most visible thing in our lives becomes the most frightening:
Thing.
The problem.
The diagnosis.
The conflict.
The uncertainty.
The:
Dragon.
And when that happens, fear can convince us that the threat is the beginning of the:
Story.
Revelation 12 begins somewhere:
Else.
Before the dragon appears—
there is a:
Woman.
Before the threat—
there is a:
Promise.
Before evil reacts—
God is already:
Working.
That does not mean the dragon is imaginary.
It does not mean the suffering that follows is:
Unimportant.
It means evil never gets to write the first:
Sentence.
God was there:
First.
His promise was there:
First.
His purpose was already:

Moving.
And perhaps faith sometimes means remembering that what frightens us entered a story God was already:
Writing.

## Something Worth Pondering

John could have introduced Chapter 12 with the:
Dragon.
He did:
Not.
He begins with the:
Woman.
The dragon will appear.
The conflict will become:
Severe.
But evil enters the vision:
Second.
That may seem like a small literary:
Detail.
Perhaps it is:
Not.
The dragon does not create the story.
He attempts to interrupt:
It.
He does not create God's purpose.
He attempts to oppose:
It.
He does not create the promise.
He attempts to destroy:
It.
The enemy is powerful.
But he is always:
Late.
God was already:
There.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When something frightening enters my life, do I begin treating it as though it has become the whole story?
Can I remember that God's purposes were already at work before the problem ever appeared?
And when the dragon captures my attention, am I willing to look again for the signs of what God was already doing?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:2

**“And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”**
— Revelation 12:2, KJV

The woman is:
Glorious.
Clothed with the:
Sun.
The moon beneath her:
Feet.
Twelve stars upon her:
Head.
And she is:
Crying.
That contrast should stop us.
Revelation does not give us a woman whose glory has protected her from:
Pain.
It gives us glory and agony in the same:
Picture.
Promise and pain.
Expectation and struggle.
Something is about to be:
Born.
But before the birth—
there is:
Labor.

## 1. “She Being with Child”

The woman is carrying:
Life.
Something has been growing within:
Her.
Something promised.
Something expected.
Something the story of Scripture has been moving toward for:
Generations.
The child has not yet appeared.
But the promise is already:
Present.
Hidden does not mean:
Absent.

## 2. Pregnancy Means the Story Is Moving Somewhere

Pregnancy is inherently:
Forward-looking.
It points toward something that has not yet:
Arrived.
The present condition anticipates a future:
Moment.
That makes the image especially appropriate for the long story of God's:
Promise.
For generations Israel lived with:
Expectation.
Something was:
Coming.
Someone was:
Coming.

## 3. The Promise Did Not Begin in Bethlehem

Bethlehem was the place of:
Birth.
But the promise was much:
Older.
It reaches backward through:
David.
Judah.
Jacob.
Abraham.
And ultimately into the earliest pages of:
Scripture.
God's redemptive purpose had been moving toward Christ long before Mary and Joseph ever traveled to:
Bethlehem.
Verse 2 gathers that long expectation into the image of a woman about to give:
Birth.

## 4. Israel Knew What It Meant to Wait

Generation followed:
Generation.
Kings came and:
Went.
Kingdoms rose and:
Fell.
Prophets spoke.
Empires conquered.
Exile came.

Return came.
Foreign powers ruled.
And still God's people:
Waited.
The promise remained.
But fulfillment did not always arrive according to the timetable people:
Expected.

## 5. Waiting Is Not the Same as Abandonment

That distinction matters.
When a promise takes a long time to reach fulfillment, delay can begin to feel like:
Absence.
We may wonder whether God has:
Forgotten.
Whether circumstances have changed His:
Plans.
Whether the promise still:
Stands.
But pregnancy is a wonderful image for something happening even when fulfillment cannot yet be:
Seen.
God can be working while His people are still:
Waiting.

## 6. “Cried”

The woman is not waiting:
Quietly.
She cries:
Out.
Her experience is intense.
Audible.
Painful.
There is nothing sentimental about the:
Scene.
John does not romanticize the suffering involved in bringing forth the:
Child.
The promise is real.
So is the:
Pain.

## 7. Scripture Allows God's People to Cry Out

That phrase—
crying out—
belongs naturally within the language of:
Scripture.

Israel cried out under oppression.
The psalmists cried:
Out.
The prophets cried:
Out.
The martyrs beneath the altar cried:
Out.
Faith does not require silence in the presence of:
Pain.
Sometimes faithful people:
Cry.
Sometimes they:
Lament.
Sometimes they ask:
How long?

## 8. Lament Is Not the Opposite of Faith

We sometimes treat lament as though it represents a failure to:
Trust.
Scripture does:
Not.
Biblical lament brings pain into the presence of:
God.
It refuses to pretend everything is:
Fine.
But it also refuses to walk away from the One to whom the cry is:
Directed.
The woman cries.
Yet God's purpose continues to unfold through:
Her.

## 9. “Travailing in Birth”

John specifically identifies her suffering as:
Birth pangs.
That matters.
This is pain with a:
Direction.
The suffering is moving toward:
Birth.
Toward:
Arrival.
Toward something coming into the world that was not visible:
Before.
Not all suffering can be explained this:
Way.

And we should be very careful not to tell suffering people that every pain is simply producing some wonderful earthly:
Outcome.
Scripture does not give us permission to make that:
Promise.
But this particular pain belongs to the arrival of the:
Child.

## 10. Birth Pangs Carry Biblical History

The image of labor pains appears repeatedly throughout:
Scripture.
Prophets used it to describe:
Distress.
Judgment.
Fear.
Historical upheaval.
And sometimes the painful transition toward something God was bringing:
About.
The image communicates suffering that intensifies toward a decisive:
Moment.
John stands within that prophetic:
Tradition.

## 11. The Woman's Pain Is Part of a Larger Story

If the woman represents the covenant people of God, then her labor reaches beyond one moment in:
Bethlehem.
The Messiah comes from a people whose history contains enormous:
Pain.
Slavery.
Wilderness.
War.
Exile.
Occupation.
Longing.
Waiting.
The story through which the Messiah comes is not a story untouched by:
Suffering.

## 12. Mary Also Knew the Pain Personally

And once again, the larger symbolic meaning should not cause us to forget the actual woman who gave birth to:
Jesus.
Mary did not experience the incarnation as an abstract theological:
Doctrine.
She carried a:

Child.
She traveled while:
Pregnant.
She gave:
Birth.
The Word became flesh within the ordinary vulnerability of human:
Life.
The cosmic story entered history through something as human as:
Childbirth.

## 13. Revelation Brings Heaven and Earth Together

Verse 1 gave us:
Heaven.
Sun.
Moon.
Stars.
Verse 2 gives us:
Pregnancy.
Crying.
Labor.
Pain.
Cosmic glory and human suffering stand side by:
Side.
That is one of Revelation's remarkable:
Patterns.
Heaven is never disconnected from what God's people experience upon the:
Earth.

## 14. Glory Does Not Cancel Agony

The woman is clothed with the:
Sun.
And still she:
Hurts.
She wears a crown.
And still she:
Cries.
That should correct a shallow understanding of God's:
Favor.
Being part of God's purpose does not guarantee freedom from:
Pain.
Sometimes people standing directly within God's purposes experience extraordinary:
Suffering.
The cross should have taught us that:
Already.

## 15. Pain Does Not Cancel Glory

But the truth also works in the opposite:
Direction.
The woman is suffering.
But her suffering does not remove her:
Glory.
Pain does not mean God has rejected:
Her.
Her cries do not mean God's purpose has:
Failed.
The agony is real.
So is the:
Promise.
We should be careful not to interpret every painful circumstance as evidence that something has gone spiritually:
Wrong.

## 16. Something Is About to Be Born

Verse 2 cannot be read without anticipating Verse: 5
We know who is:
Coming.
The male child.
The One who will rule the nations with a rod of:
Iron.
The:
Messiah.
The woman may be crying now.
But her pain does not have the final:
Word.
Birth is:
Coming.

## 17. The Dragon Has Not Even Appeared Yet

This is worth noticing.
The woman is already experiencing pain before the dragon enters the vision in Verse: 3
Not every form of suffering should automatically be attributed directly to:
Satan.
We sometimes become too eager to give the devil credit for every difficult thing that:
Happens.
Revelation itself is more:
Careful.
The dragon will certainly bring opposition.
But labor itself belongs to the process of:

Birth.

## 18. We Should Not Give the Dragon Too Much Credit

That will become increasingly important in this:
Chapter.
The dragon is real.
His hostility is real.
His destructive intention is:
Real.
But he is not responsible for everything that happens in the:
Story.
Nor is he the central actor.
If we explain everything through the dragon, we have already given him more attention than John:
Does.
God's purpose was unfolding before the dragon entered the:
Scene.

## 19. God Works Through Human History

The Messiah does not descend into the world detached from human:
History.
He is:
Born.
He enters a family.
A people.
A nation.
A story.
God's redemption does not bypass human:
Existence.
God enters:
It.
The incarnation means God has come astonishingly close to the realities of human:
Life.

## 20. The Promise Comes Through Vulnerability

Consider the image.
The future ruler of the nations is about to enter the world as a:
Child.
Not an army.
Not an emperor.
Not a warrior descending from the:
Sky.
A:
Child.
Vulnerable.

Dependent.
Small.
God's way of accomplishing His purposes often looks very different from what human power would:
Choose.

## 21. The World Measures Power Differently

The world looks for:
Armies.
Wealth.
Influence.
Force.
Status.
God gives the world a:
Baby.
That contrast will become even sharper when the dragon:
Appears.
A great red dragon against a newborn:
Child.
By appearances, there should be no:
Contest.
But appearances are not the final measure of:
Reality.

## 22. The Pain Has a Boundary

Labor feels overwhelming while it is:
Happening.
But labor is moving toward a:
Moment.
The woman will not remain forever in Verse: 2
Verse 5 is:
Coming.
The child will be:
Born.
That does not minimize the agony.
It places the agony inside a larger:
Story.

## 23. Never Freeze the Story in the Painful Verse

This is one of the dangers we face when reading both Scripture and our own:
Lives.
We stop at the verse we are currently:
Living.
The painful:
Verse.
The confusing:

Verse.
The waiting:
Verse.
And we assume it must be the final:
Verse.
But Revelation keeps teaching us:
Keep reading.
The story is not finished simply because the present sentence:
Hurts.

## 24. The Cry Is Not the Conclusion

Verse 2 contains:
Crying.
Agony.
Birth pangs.
But those are not the conclusion of the:
Vision.
The cry announces that something is about to:
Happen.
The pain itself tells us the story is:
Moving.
The woman cries because the child is:
Coming.

## 25. Promise and Pain Can Occupy the Same Moment

Perhaps that is the deepest pastoral truth of this short:
Verse.
We often think we must be experiencing either:
Blessing—
or:
Pain.
Either God's purpose—
or:
Difficulty.
Either faith—
or:
Struggle.
Revelation 12:2 refuses that simple:
Choice.
The woman carries the:
Promise.
And she experiences the:
Pain.
Both are true at the same:
Time.

Sometimes faith must endure precisely because promise and pain occupy the same:
Moment.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are seasons when we assume that if God is truly working, things should become:
Easier.
The path should become:
Clearer.
The pain should:
Decrease.
The questions should be:
Answered.
But Scripture repeatedly gives us a more complicated:
Picture.
Sometimes God's purposes unfold through seasons that:
Hurt.
That does not mean every painful experience has a hidden explanation we can:
Discover.
Nor should we tell someone who is suffering that their pain must be producing some specific blessing they simply cannot:
See.
We do not know that.
But Revelation 12:2 does remind us of something we can:
Know.
Pain does not automatically mean God has:
Left.
Waiting does not mean God has:
Forgotten.
And crying out does not mean faith has:
Failed.
The woman is still clothed with the:
Sun.
The crown is still upon her:
Head.
The promise is still within:
Her.
And she still:
Cries.
Faith sometimes looks exactly like:
That.
Holding the promise while crying through the:

Pain.

## Something Worth Pondering

Verse 1 showed us how the woman looked from the outside:
Glorious.
Verse 2 tells us what she was experiencing on the:
Inside.
Agony.
That difference should make us careful about judging other people's:
Lives.
Someone may appear:
Strong.
Faithful.
Blessed.
Confident.
And still be carrying pain we cannot:
See.
A crown does not mean there are no:
Tears.
Glory does not mean there is no:
Struggle.
And perhaps some of the strongest faith we will ever encounter belongs to someone who is crying out—
and still carrying the:
Promise.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When pain enters my life, do I immediately assume that God must have stopped working?
Can I allow myself to cry out to God without believing that lament means my faith has failed?
And when I am living in a painful verse, can I trust God enough to keep reading?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:3

**“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.”**
— Revelation 12:3, KJV

Then another:
Wonder.
The first was a:
Woman.
The second is a:
Dragon.
The first carries:
Life.
The second will bring:
Threat.
The first is clothed with the:
Sun.
The second is described as:
Great.
Red.
Many-headed.
Horned.
Crowned.
John does not yet tell us the dragon's:
Name.
That will come in Verse: 9
For now—
John wants us to:
See him.
And what John shows us is deliberately:
Terrifying.
But before the dragon does anything—
we need to notice what he:
Is.
And perhaps even more importantly—
what he is:
Not.

## 1. “There Appeared Another Wonder”

John uses the language of:
Sign—

again.
The woman was a:
Wonder.
The dragon is another:
Wonder.
That reminds us that we remain within symbolic:
Vision.
John is not giving us a zoological description of an enormous:
Reptile.
He is showing us spiritual reality through apocalyptic:
Imagery.
The dragon means something.
And Revelation will soon tell us exactly who stands behind the:
Image.

## 2. The Dragon Appears Second

The order deserves:
Attention.
The dragon does not appear:
First.
The woman is already:
There.
The promise is already:
Moving.
The child is already about to be:
Born.
Then—
the dragon:
Appears.
Evil enters a story God is already:
Writing.
The dragon is not the author.
He is the:
Opponent.

## 3. “A Great Red Dragon”

John describes the dragon as:
Great.
The word communicates:
Magnitude.
Impressiveness.
Threat.
This is not an enemy to be treated:
Casually.
Revelation never asks God's people to pretend evil is:

Harmless.
Faith does not require us to underestimate what opposes:
God.
But recognizing the dragon's power is not the same as granting him:
Ultimate power.

## 4. He Is Red

The dragon is:
Red.
We should be cautious about assigning a precise meaning to every:
Color.
But red has already appeared significantly in:
Revelation.
The second horse was fiery:
Red.
Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth so that people would slaughter one:
Another.
Here again, red appears in connection with a figure associated with:
Destruction.
Violence.
Bloodshed.
At minimum, the color fits the character John is about to:
Reveal.

## 5. The Dragon Is Meant to Frighten Us

Seven heads.
Ten horns.
Seven diadems.
This is not subtle:
Imagery.
John wants the dragon to appear:
Formidable.
There is something pastorally important about:
That.
Revelation does not strengthen believers by pretending their enemy is:
Weak.
It strengthens them by showing that even a terrifying enemy remains beneath the authority of:
God.

## 6. Seven Heads

The dragon has:
Seven heads.
And immediately we may want to begin:
Decoding.

Why seven?
Why heads?
What does each head:
Represent?
Those questions will become more relevant as Revelation itself develops the imagery in later:
Chapters.
For now, John has not given us seven:
Names.
So neither will:
We.
The image communicates extraordinary and unnatural:
Power.
And we will allow later Scripture to tell us more before we say:
More.

## 7. Ten Horns

The dragon also has:
Ten horns.
In biblical prophetic imagery, horns frequently represent:
Power.
Strength.
Kings.
Kingdoms.
Authority.
Daniel immediately comes to:
Mind.
And Daniel will become increasingly important as Revelation's beast imagery:
Develops.
But once again—
we should notice the connection without running ahead of the:
Text.
The dragon is presented as possessing formidable:
Power.

## 8. Daniel Is in the Background

Readers familiar with Daniel cannot hear about multiple horns and monstrous figures without remembering Daniel's:
Visions.
Daniel saw beasts.
Horns.
Kingdoms.
Rulers.
Powers opposed to the people and purposes of:

God.
John draws from that same prophetic world of:
Imagery.
Revelation does not appear from nowhere.
It speaks the language of the Scriptures that came:
Before it.

## 9. Seven Diadems

Upon the dragon's heads are seven:
Diadems.
These are royal:
Crowns.
Claims of:
Rule.
Authority.
Kingship.
The dragon does not merely want to:
Destroy.
He wants to:
Rule.
That distinction will become enormously important as Revelation:
Continues.
The conflict is about:
Worship.
Authority.
Allegiance.
And who truly has the right to:
Reign.

## 10. The Dragon Wears Crowns

That image should make us:
Uncomfortable.
Because crowns imply:
Kingship.
The dragon presents himself as one who possesses the right to:
Rule.
But Revelation has already settled that:
Question.
The seventh trumpet has sounded.
The kingdom belongs to God and His:
Messiah.
So whatever crowns the dragon wears—
they cannot represent ultimate:
Sovereignty.
He wears crowns inside a story where the true King has already been:

Announced.

## 11. There Is a Difference Between Claiming Authority and Possessing Ultimate Authority

Human history knows plenty of people who have claimed:
Power.
Kings.
Emperors.
Dictators.
Governments.
Empires.
Some have seemed almost:
Unstoppable.
But Revelation asks us to distinguish between authority exercised for a:
Time—
and sovereignty that belongs to:
God.
The dragon may wear:
Diadems.
God still owns the:
Throne.

## 12. Evil Often Counterfeits

Something begins to emerge in the dragon's:
Appearance.
He possesses features associated with:
Authority.
Crowns.
Power.
Rule.
As Revelation continues, evil will repeatedly imitate and counterfeit what properly belongs to:
God.
That is often how evil:
Works.
It rarely creates something genuinely:
New.
It takes what is good—
and:
Distorts it.
Takes authority—
and turns it into:
Domination.
Takes worship—
and directs it toward the:

Creature.
Takes power—
and uses it for:
Destruction.

## 13. The Dragon Wants What Belongs to God

Behind the imagery lies a fundamental:
Conflict.
Who will be:
Worshiped?
Who will:
Rule?
Who receives:
Allegiance?
Who determines the future of:
Creation?
The dragon's crowns reveal his:
Ambition.
But ambition does not create:
Entitlement.
The dragon may desire the throne.
That does not make the throne:
His.

## 14. Revelation Does Not Give Us Two Gods

This deserves to be stated:
Clearly.
Christian faith is not:
Dualism.
God and Satan are not equal eternal beings struggling for control of:
Reality.
Satan is not the evil equivalent of:
God.
There is no cosmic scale with God on one side and the dragon balancing Him on the:
Other.
There is:
God.
And there is everything God has:
Made.
The dragon belongs on the creature side of that:
Distinction.

## 15. The Dragon Has Real Power

Saying the dragon is not God's equal does not mean his power is:
Imaginary.

Revelation takes evil very:
Seriously.
The dragon deceives.
Accuses.
Persecutes.
Makes war.
Empowers beasts.
Opposes God's:
People.
This is a genuine:
Enemy.
But a real enemy does not have to be an equal enemy to be:
Dangerous.

## 16. We Should Avoid Two Opposite Mistakes

We can make evil too:
Large.
Or too:
Small.
Make it too large—
and we begin acting as though God might:
Lose.
Make it too small—
and we stop taking spiritual evil:
Seriously.
Revelation permits neither:
Error.
The dragon is:
Terrifying.
And the dragon is:
Limited.
Both truths must remain:
Together.

## 17. John Has Not Named Him Yet

Another important detail:
John has not yet said:
Satan.
Not in this:
Verse.
We know where the chapter is going.
Verse 9 will identify the dragon as the ancient serpent, the Devil, and:
Satan.
But John allows the image to develop before giving us the:
Name.

Perhaps he wants us first to see the character of the enemy through what the dragon:
Does.

## 18. The Ancient Serpent Is Coming Into View

Even before Verse 9 explicitly identifies him, the dragon imagery begins pulling us backward toward the biblical:
Story.
Eventually John will call him the ancient:
Serpent.
That will take us all the way back toward:
Eden.
Revelation's conflict is not merely about the Roman Empire.
Not merely about John's own:
Generation.
John places the Church's struggle within the ancient conflict between God's purposes and the one who opposes:
Them.

## 19. The Dragon Works Through Earthly Power

The crowns and horns also prepare us for something Revelation will make increasingly:
Clear.
Spiritual evil can work through earthly structures of:
Power.
Kingdoms.
Rulers.
Empires.
Systems.
That does not mean every government or authority should simply be labeled:
Demonic.
Revelation does not give us permission for that kind of careless:
Claim.
But it does warn us that political and imperial power can become an instrument of something spiritually:
Corrupt.

## 20. Rome Would Have Understood Crowns

John's first readers lived beneath the enormous shadow of:
Rome.
Imperial power could appear:
Absolute.
Rome had armies.
Wealth.
Political authority.
Emperors.

Temples.
Claims upon public:
Loyalty.
Revelation invites believers to look behind every human claim of absolute authority and ask a deeper:
Question.
Who truly:
Reigns?

## 21. The Dragon Looks Impressive

That may be part of the:
Danger.
Evil does not always appear obviously:
Pathetic.
Sometimes it looks:
Powerful.
Successful.
Dominant.
Impressive.
Even:
Royal.
Seven diadems.
Ten horns.
Seven heads.
By appearances—
the dragon seems almost:
Unstoppable.
But Revelation has already taught us not to judge ultimate reality by:
Appearances.

## 22. The Throne Comes Before the Dragon

Remember where John has already taken:
Us.
Chapter 4 showed us the:
Throne.
Chapter 5 showed us the:
Lamb.
Chapter 11 proclaimed the:
Kingdom.
And Chapter 11 ended with the:
Covenant.
Only then does John show us the:
Dragon.
We meet evil after we have already been shown who:
Reigns.

That order is profoundly:
Pastoral.

## 23. We Never Have to Ask Whether God Can Handle the Dragon

John does not introduce the dragon and leave us wondering whether heaven has encountered an unexpected:
Problem.
The dragon does not surprise:
God.
He does not threaten God's:
Existence.
He does not force God into an emergency:
Plan.
The throne was occupied before the dragon ever entered John's:
Vision.

## 24. The Dragon Is Already Standing in a Losing Story

We have only reached Verse: 3
The dragon has not yet made his:
Move.
But we already know something he cannot:
Change.
The Messiah will:
Reign.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
The covenant still:
Stands.
The throne is still:
Occupied.
The dragon may be great.
But he has entered a story whose ending has already been:
Announced.

## 25. Never Let the Dragon Become Bigger Than the Throne

Perhaps that is the great pastoral guardrail as we enter this portion of:
Revelation.
We are going to see frightening:
Things.
Dragon.
War.
Beasts.
Persecution.

Deception.
Revelation wants us to take all of them:
Seriously.
But never:
Ultimately.
The dragon is:
Great.
God is:
God.
Those are not equal:
Statements.
And Revelation never wants us to confuse:
Them.

## Pastoral Reflection

Some problems become larger the longer we stare at:
Them.
Fear does that.
The diagnosis grows.
The financial problem grows.
The conflict grows.
The uncertainty grows.
The opposition grows.
Until eventually the problem seems to fill the entire:
Horizon.
The dragon becomes all we can:
See.
Revelation does not tell us to pretend the dragon is:
Small.
Verse 3 describes him as:
Great.
But Revelation has already shown us something:
Greater.
The:
Throne.
That is one of the great disciplines of:
Faith.
Not denying the size of what frightens:
Us.
But refusing to allow what frightens us to become larger in our minds than the God who:
Reigns.
The dragon may be:
Great.

The problem may be:
Real.
The threat may be:
Serious.
But none of them sit upon the:
Throne.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon wears seven:
Diadems.
He looks:
Royal.
Powerful.
Impressive.
Perhaps even:
Invincible.
But a crown upon someone's head does not automatically mean the kingdom belongs to:
Them.
Revelation has already told us whose kingdom this:
Is.
That means the dragon's crowns cannot change the deepest reality of the:
Story.
Evil can claim.
Evil can imitate.
Evil can intimidate.
Evil can even exercise power for a:
Time.
But it cannot make itself:
God.
The dragon may wear crowns.
But he still stands beneath the:
Throne.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When something frightening appears powerful, do I begin treating its power as though it were unlimited?
Have I allowed any problem, person, institution, or circumstance to become larger in my imagination than the God who reigns?
And when I see the dragon, can I remember the throne?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:4

**“And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”**
— Revelation 12:4, KJV

Now the dragon:
Moves.
His appearance was terrifying enough.
Seven heads.
Ten horns.
Seven diadems.
But Verse 4 shows us that the dragon is not merely:
Impressive.
He is:
Destructive.
His tail sweeps across the heavens.
Stars fall.
Then he takes his position before the:
Woman.
Waiting.
Watching.
Ready to:
Devour.
This is evil stripped of every:
Disguise.
The woman carries:
Life.
The dragon waits for:
Death.

## 1. “His Tail Drew”

John begins with an image of extraordinary:
Force.
The dragon's tail sweeps through the:
Heavens.
This is not delicate:
Imagery.
Something violent is being:
Described.
The dragon does not nurture.
He does not create.

He:
Destroys.
That is already telling us something about the nature of the enemy John is:
Showing us.

## 2. “The Third Part of the Stars of Heaven”

The dragon sweeps down:
A third.
And once again Revelation gives us that familiar:
Fraction.
We heard it repeatedly during the trumpet:
Judgments.
A third of the earth.
A third of the trees.
A third of the sea.
A third of the waters.
A third of the heavenly:
Lights.
Now—
a third of the stars.

## 3. The Number Suggests Something Limited

Whatever else the image may:
Mean—
the dragon does not sweep away:
Everything.
A third is enormous.
But a third is not:
All.
That distinction has mattered before in:
Revelation.
It matters again:
Here.
The dragon's destructive power is:
Real.
But it is not:
Unlimited.

## 4. Who Are the Stars?

And here interpreters have asked the obvious:
Question.
What do the stars:
Represent?
Some understand them as angelic beings associated with Satan's:
Rebellion.
That interpretation has become especially common in Christian teaching.

Others understand the stars more generally as part of the cosmic imagery expressing the dragon's enormous destructive:
Power.
The verse itself does not explicitly:
Identify them.
That should matter to:
Us.

## 5. We Should Not Make John Say More Than John Says

Later in this chapter John will clearly identify the dragon.
He will clearly describe war in:
Heaven.
He will clearly speak about the dragon and his:
Angels.
But Verse 4 itself does not say:
“One third of the angels followed Satan.”
That conclusion may be drawn by connecting several parts of the:
Vision.
But it should not be presented as though John explicitly says it:
Here.
Where Scripture leaves room—
we will leave room:
Too.

## 6. The Image Still Tells Us Something Clearly

Even if we leave the precise identity of the stars:
Open—
the meaning of the action is hardly:
Unclear.
The dragon's presence brings:
Disruption.
Destruction.
Disorder.
What he touches is thrown:
Down.
The image presents evil as something that tears down rather than builds:
Up.

## 7. Evil Cannot Create What God Creates

There is something worth noticing throughout:
Scripture.
God:
Creates.
God gives:
Life.
God establishes.

God restores.
Evil repeatedly:
Corrupts.
Distorts.
Destroys.
Devours.
The dragon does not create stars.
He throws them:
Down.
He does not create the child.
He waits to:
Devour Him.
Evil is always dependent upon something it did not:
Create.

## 8. The Dragon's Attention Turns Toward the Woman

Then the vision narrows:
Dramatically.
From stars across the heavens—
to one:
Woman.
The dragon stands before:
Her.
The cosmic becomes:
Personal.
The enemy who appears capable of disturbing the heavens now focuses his attention upon a woman about to give:
Birth.
Why?
Because of the:
Child.

## 9. “The Woman Which Was Ready to Be Delivered”

Verse 2 told us the woman was crying out in the agony of:
Labor.
Now the moment of delivery is:
Near.
The promise is about to become:
Visible.
The long expectation is about to reach:
Fulfillment.
And precisely there—
the dragon takes his:
Position.

## 10. The Dragon Cannot Stop the Pregnancy

Notice what has already:
Happened.
The woman is:
Pregnant.
The child has developed.
The moment of birth has:
Arrived.
The dragon appears late in the:
Process.
Once again—
evil enters a story God has already been:
Writing.
The dragon cannot prevent the promise from being:
Conceived.
So he waits to attack the promise when it:
Appears.

## 11. "For to Devour Her Child"

John gives us the dragon's intention without:
Ambiguity.
Devour.
Not merely oppose.
Not merely delay.
Not merely:
Threaten.
Destroy.
The dragon wants the child:
Gone.
This is the character of evil revealed without:
Decoration.
What God brings forth for life—
the dragon seeks to:
Devour.

## 12. The Child Is the Target

The woman suffers.
But the dragon's immediate target is the:
Child.
That tells us something important about the conflict.
The dragon recognizes that the child represents a threat to his:
Claims.
Verse 5 will tell us:
Why.
This child is destined to rule the:

Nations.
The dragon wears crowns.
But the child possesses the true right to:
Rule.
There is the conflict.

## 13. The Dragon Knows the Promise Is Dangerous to His Kingdom

The dragon's hostility is not:
Random.
He waits specifically for the:
Child.
Why?
Because God's Messiah means the defeat of every rival claim to:
Rule.
The child represents the fulfillment of God's:
Promise.
And God's fulfilled promise means the dragon's apparent kingdom cannot:
Last.

## 14. The Scene Echoes the Larger Biblical Story

Once again, Scripture gives us echoes.
Pharaoh feared the growth of Israel and ordered Hebrew sons:
Killed.
Athaliah attempted to destroy the royal line of:
Judah.
Herod sought the child born King of the:
Jews.
In each story, human rulers act within their own historical:
Circumstances.
We should not flatten those stories into identical:
Events.
But the pattern is difficult to:
Miss.
Power repeatedly attempts to destroy what God has promised to: Preserve.

## 15. Herod Especially Comes to Mind

For Christian readers, the scene naturally recalls:
Herod.
A child is:
Born.
A ruler feels:
Threatened.
Children are:
Killed.

The promised child is:
Preserved.
Matthew tells the historical story.
Revelation pulls back the curtain and shows us the deeper spiritual conflict within which the coming of Christ takes:
Place.
The earthly story and the heavenly conflict belong to the same redemptive:
Drama.

## 16. Evil Often Attacks What It Fears

The dragon's position before the woman reveals something almost:
Ironic.
For all his terrifying appearance—
the dragon is:
Afraid.
Why else wait for the:
Child?
The one with seven heads, ten horns, and seven diadems sees a newborn as a:
Threat.
That tells us something about the child before Verse 5 ever explains:
It.
This is no ordinary:
Child.

## 17. Look at the Contrast

On one side:
A great red dragon.
Seven heads.
Ten horns.
Seven diadems.
On the other:
A woman in labor.
And soon—
a newborn:
Child.
By every ordinary measure of power, the outcome should be:
Obvious.
The dragon should:
Win.
But Revelation has spent eleven chapters teaching us not to measure reality by:
Appearances.

## 18. The Dragon Waits

There is something chilling in that:
Image.

He stands before the woman.
Waiting.
The child has not yet been:
Born.
But the dragon is already prepared to:
Attack.
Evil can be:
Patient.
Watchful.
Opportunistic.
Peter would later describe the devil as a roaring lion prowling around looking for someone to:
Devour.
The imagery differs.
The appetite does:
Not.

## 19. Yet the Dragon Can Only Wait

And there is another way to look at the same:
Scene.
The dragon is standing there.
Waiting.
He does not determine when the child is:
Born.
He does not control the:
Promise.
He does not write the:
Schedule.
He can position himself in opposition.
But God's purpose continues moving toward:
Fulfillment.

## 20. The Dragon Is Reactive

This has become one of the important patterns of the:
Vision.
God acts.
The dragon:
Reacts.
God establishes His purpose.
The dragon tries to:
Oppose it.
God brings forth life.
The dragon tries to:
Devour it.
The dragon looks terrifying.

But he is never the one setting the ultimate direction of the:
Story.

## 21. The Dragon Does Not Get the First Word

He did not get the first word in Verse: 1
He does not get the first word in the larger biblical:
Story.
Creation comes before:
Rebellion.
Promise comes before:
Opposition.
Covenant comes before:
Conflict.
And the kingdom has already been announced before John ever shows us the:
Dragon.

## 22. Nor Will He Get the Last Word

Verse 4 leaves us at a moment of enormous:
Tension.
The woman is ready to give:
Birth.
The dragon is ready to:
Devour.
If Revelation ended here, we would have every reason to:
Fear.
But Revelation does not end at Verse: 4
Verse 5 is:
Coming.
And that may be one of the simplest lessons we can carry from this:
Scene.
Never stop reading while the dragon is still:
Waiting.

## 23. Evil's Intention Is Not the Same as Evil's Achievement

The dragon intends to devour the:
Child.
Intent matters.
The threat is:
Real.
But wanting something is not the same as accomplishing:
It.
Revelation will repeatedly distinguish between what evil:
Attempts—
and what God ultimately:

Allows.
The dragon has a plan.
God has a:
Purpose.
Those are not equal:
Things.

## 24. The Dragon Is Powerful—But Already Bounded

A third.
Not:
All.
Waiting.
Not:
Controlling.
Opposing.
Not:
Sovereign.
The verse itself quietly places boundaries around the terrifying creature it:
Describes.
The dragon is dangerous enough that we should take him:
Seriously.
And limited enough that we should never mistake him for:
God.

## 25. The Dragon Waits Before a Promise He Cannot Stop

Perhaps that is the great irony of Verse: 4
The dragon stands exactly where he wants to:
Stand.
He is ready.
The woman is vulnerable.
The child is about to:
Appear.
Everything seems arranged in the dragon's:
Favor.
But the dragon is waiting before a promise God has already determined to:
Fulfill.
He can threaten the:
Promise.
He can oppose the:
Promise.
He can attempt to devour the:
Promise.
But he cannot become the author of how the story:
Ends.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are moments when life feels like Verse: 4
You can see the:
Threat.
You know what it wants to:
Destroy.
And it seems to be standing exactly where you are most:
Vulnerable.
Faith does not require us to pretend that such moments are not:
Frightening.
John certainly does not make the dragon:
Cute.
He shows us something terrifying.
But he also quietly shows us its:
Limits.
A third.
Not:
All.
Waiting.
Not:
Ruling.
Intent.
Not:
Outcome.
Sometimes fear takes what might happen and begins treating it as though it already:
Has.
Revelation reminds us that the enemy's intention is not the same thing as the final:
Outcome.
Verse 4 tells us what the dragon wants.
Verse 5 will tell us what actually:
Happens.
There is a world of difference between the:
Two.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon stands before the woman waiting to devour her:
Child.
From the dragon's perspective, perhaps everything seems perfectly:
Positioned.
He is powerful.
She is vulnerable.
The child will be:

Helpless.
And yet the dragon has misunderstood the most important thing in the:
Scene.
This child belongs to God's:
Purpose.
The dragon sees:
Opportunity.
God sees:
Fulfillment.
The dragon has an:
Intention.
God has a:
Promise.
And Revelation is about to show us which one determines the:
Future.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Have I ever allowed what I fear might happen to become as powerful in my mind as though it had already happened?
When I see evil positioned against something precious, can I distinguish between what evil intends and what God ultimately permits?
And when I find myself living in Verse 4, can I trust God enough to keep reading into Verse 5?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:5

**“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”**
— Revelation 12:5, KJV

Verse 4 left the dragon:
Waiting.
Standing before the woman.
Ready to:
Devour.
Everything about the scene seemed to favor the:
Dragon.
And then—
the child is:
Born.
Just like:
That.
The dragon was ready.
The dragon was watching.
The dragon had a:
Plan.
And God's promise came forth:
Anyway.

## 1. “She Brought Forth”

Those words are wonderfully:
Simple.
After the labor.
After the crying.
After the agony.
After the dragon positioned himself to:
Attack.
She gave:
Birth.
The dragon's presence did not stop what God was bringing:
Forth.
The promise became:
Reality.

## 2. Verse 4 Told Us What the Dragon Intended

The dragon intended to:
Devour.
Verse 5 tells us what actually:

Happened.
That distinction matters.
The dragon has:
Intentions.
God has:
Purposes.
And throughout Revelation we must never confuse the enemy's intention with the final:
Outcome.
What evil wants is not necessarily what evil:
Gets.

## 3. “A Man Child”

John emphasizes the identity of the:
Child.
A son.
A male:
Child.
The language prepares us for the description that immediately:
Follows.
This is the child the dragon has been waiting to:
Destroy.
But John does not define Him by the dragon's:
Threat.
He defines Him by His God-given:
Destiny.

## 4. “Who Was to Rule All Nations”

Now the identity becomes:
Clear.
This child is destined to rule all the:
Nations.
Not some.
Not merely Israel.
Not one earthly:
Kingdom.
All the:
Nations.
The dragon wears diadems.
But this child possesses the right to:
Rule.
The contrast could hardly be more:
Important.

## 5. Psalm 2 Is Speaking in the Background

John's language reaches directly into Psalm: 2

The nations rage.
The peoples plot.
Kings take their stand.
Rulers gather against the Lord and His:
Anointed.
And yet God establishes His:
King.
The nations may:
Rage.
But their rage does not determine who:
Reigns.

## 6. “With a Rod of Iron”

The child will rule with a rod of:
Iron.
The image communicates firm and decisive:
Rule.
This is not a kingdom that can finally be overturned by:
Rebellion.
The Messiah's authority will not collapse beneath the resistance of the:
Nations.
Human kingdoms rise.
Human kingdoms fall.
His kingdom:
Remains.

## 7. We Have Heard This Language Before

Revelation has already used Psalm 2:
Language.
Jesus promised the one who conquers authority over the:
Nations—
to rule them with an iron:
Rod.
Now John shows us the One from whom that authority ultimately:
Comes.
The endurance of the saints is connected to the reign of:
Christ.
They endure because He:
Reigns.

## 8. Chapter 11 Has Prepared Us for This

The seventh trumpet has already:
Sounded.
And heaven has already:
Declared—
the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His:

Messiah.
Now Chapter 12 shows us the Messiah whose kingdom was:
Proclaimed.
The chapters belong:
Together.
Chapter 11 gives us the:
Announcement.
Chapter 12 pulls back the curtain on the:
Conflict.

## 9. The Nations Rage—But the Child Rules

That contrast deserves to be held:
Together.
The nations may:
Rage.
The dragon may:
Oppose.
The beasts will soon:
Rise.
Earthly powers may appear:
Dominant.
But none of them receives the final:
Sentence.
The child will rule the:
Nations.
Revelation tells us the ending before showing us more of the:
Middle.

## 10. The Dragon's Crowns Are Exposed

Remember Verse: 3
Seven:
Diadems.
The dragon presents himself with the appearance of:
Royalty.
But now Verse 5 exposes the weakness behind those:
Crowns.
The dragon may wear symbols of:
Rule.
The child possesses the divine promise to:
Rule.
One is a claim.
The other is a:
Promise.

## 11. The Dragon Wanted the Child Dead

John does not allow us to forget the immediate:

Danger.
The dragon was waiting to:
Devour Him.
The imagery places the coming of Christ within a conflict far larger than the events visible in:
Bethlehem.
Behind earthly hostility lies spiritual:
Opposition.
The Messiah enters a world in which evil does not welcome His:
Arrival.

## 12. Yet the Child Is Born Anyway

This deserves to be said:
Again.
Because sometimes the simplest statement carries the greatest theological:
Weight.
The child is:
Born.
The dragon could not prevent:
It.
God's promise moved forward despite everything positioned against:
It.
The dragon's first great strategy in this vision has already:
Failed.

## 13. Then John Makes an Astonishing Leap

The child is:
Born.
And then—
He is taken to God and His:
Throne.
John moves from birth to enthronement with almost nothing in:
Between.
No ministry in:
Galilee.
No disciples.
No parables.
No miracles.
No Jerusalem.
No trial.
No crucifixion.
No empty:
Tomb.
The story has been dramatically:
Compressed.

## 14. John Is Not Retelling the Gospels

That is important.
Revelation 12 is not intended to replace:
Matthew.
Mark.
Luke.
Or:
John.
John is not giving us another chronological biography of:
Jesus.
He is showing us the cosmic significance of the:
Story.
The Messiah came.
The enemy opposed Him.
And the Messiah reached the:
Throne.

## 15. The Cross Has Not Been Removed

We should not mistake compression for:
Omission of meaning.
Revelation has already placed the slain:
Lamb—
at the very center of the:
Throne.
John has not forgotten:
Calvary.
And later in this very chapter God's people will conquer through the blood of the:
Lamb.
The cross remains central to the:
Victory.
John simply moves rapidly from incarnation to:
Enthronement.

## 16. “Her Child Was Caught Up”

The language is sudden.
The child is:
Snatched away.
Taken beyond the dragon's:
Reach.
The dragon waited to:
Devour.
Instead—
the child is taken to:
God.

The enemy's intended victim becomes the enthroned:
Messiah.
That is quite a:
Reversal.

## 17. The Dragon Cannot Reach the Throne

This may be one of the most reassuring images in the:
Verse.
The child is taken to God and to His:
Throne.
The dragon may rage beneath:
It.
He may oppose God's people.
He may accuse.
Deceive.
Persecute.
But he cannot seize the throne from the One who:
Reigns.
The center of reality remains:
Secure.

## 18. The Throne Is the Destination

The child does not merely:
Escape.
He is:
Enthroned.
That distinction matters.
This is not simply rescue from:
Danger.
It is the fulfillment of His royal:
Identity.
The One the dragon sought to devour becomes the One who rules the:
Nations.
What looked like vulnerability gives way to:
Kingship.

## 19. Revelation Measures Victory Differently

The Gospel story contains something that looked very much like:
Defeat.
A cross.
A tomb.
A dead:
Messiah.
By ordinary measures of power—
the dragon might have seemed to:
Win.

But Revelation sees beyond the apparent:
Defeat.
The Lamb who was slain is:
Standing.
The child threatened by the dragon is at the:
Throne.
God's victory does not always look like victory while we are standing in the:
Middle.

## 20. The Dragon Misjudged the Cross

The powers of evil could treat the death of Jesus as:
Victory.
But the very event that appeared to destroy Him became the means through which God brought:
Salvation.
That is one of the great reversals of Christian:
Faith.
What looked like the end became the:
Beginning.
What looked like defeat became:
Victory.
What looked like a tomb became an empty:
Tomb.

## 21. The Child Is Safe—But the Conflict Is Not Finished

Here Revelation gives us an important:
Tension.
Christ is enthroned.
But Chapter 12 is not:
Finished.
The dragon has failed against the:
Child.
But he has not stopped:
Raging.
That helps us understand the world in which the Church:
Lives.
The decisive victory has been:
Won.
And the conflict continues.

## 22. This Is the World of Christian Endurance

Why must faith:
Endure—
if Christ has already:
Won?
Because the defeated enemy still:

Rages.
Because the kingdom has been inaugurated while the final removal of every enemy still lies:
Ahead.
Because God's people live between decisive victory and final:
Consummation.
That is precisely where endurance becomes:
Necessary.

## 23. The Church Does Not Endure Hoping Christ Might Win

That would be a very different:
Faith.
Christian endurance is not waiting anxiously to discover whether Jesus will ultimately:
Succeed.
The child is already at the:
Throne.
The Lamb is already:
Standing.
The kingdom has already been:
Announced.
The Church endures from the assurance of Christ's:
Victory—
not toward the possibility of:
It.

## 24. The Dragon's Failure Becomes the Setting for What Comes Next

The dragon could not stop the child's:
Birth.
He could not prevent His:
Enthronement.
And that failure will shape everything that:
Follows.
The dragon's rage will turn:
Elsewhere.
Toward the woman.
Toward her offspring.
Toward those who hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
The persecution of God's people is not evidence that the dragon has:
Won.
It is the rage of an enemy who has already failed against the:

King.

## 25. The Throne Interprets the Dragon

This may be the great truth of Verse: 5
We are tempted to interpret the throne by looking at the:
Dragon.
The dragon seems powerful—
so perhaps the throne is in:
Danger.
The dragon seems active—
so perhaps God is losing:
Control.
Revelation teaches us to reverse the:
Direction.
Interpret the dragon by looking at the:
Throne.
The child is:
There.
The Messiah:
Reigns.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
Therefore—
however frightening the dragon may become—
he is the enemy of a King he cannot:
Dethrone.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are times when we live much more naturally in Verse 4 than in Verse: 5
We see what threatens.
We imagine what could:
Happen.
We watch the dragon waiting.
And fear begins writing the rest of the:
Story.
But Verse 5 reminds us that what threatens us does not necessarily determine what happens:
Next.
The dragon had every intention of devouring the:
Child.
He did not.
The child was:
Born.
The child reached the:

Throne.
God's purpose continued despite everything positioned against:
It.
That does not mean every circumstance in our lives will turn out exactly as we:
Want.
Revelation never makes that:
Promise.
Sometimes faith endures until God changes the circumstances.
Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith endures all the way:
Home.
But Christian hope rests on something larger than the outcome of any single earthly:
Circumstance.
Christ is at the:
Throne.
Whatever verse we may presently be living—
that remains:
True.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon waited for the child to be:
Born.
He had one intention:
Devour Him.
But the child did not end up in the dragon's:
Mouth.
He ended up at God's:
Throne.
There may be no greater distance in the universe than the distance between what the dragon intended—
and what God:
Accomplished.
That is why Revelation repeatedly asks us not to judge the story too:
Soon.
Verse 4 looked terrifying.
Verse 5 looks very:
Different.
And sometimes the difference between despair and hope is simply this:
Keep reading.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Have I ever mistaken what evil intended for what God would ultimately allow?
When circumstances look like Verse 4, can I remember that I have not yet seen the whole story?
And when I need something solid enough to endure upon, can I begin with this—
Christ is at the throne?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:6

**“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”**
— Revelation 12:6, KJV

The child is at the:
Throne.
The dragon has:
Failed.
And the woman:
Flees.
That may not be the sequence we:
Expected.
Surely after the child reaches God's throne—
the danger should be:
Over.
Surely victory should mean the woman no longer needs to:
Run.
But Revelation is teaching us something we will need throughout the remainder of the:
Book.
Christ's victory does not mean God's people will never experience:
Wilderness.
Sometimes victory and wilderness exist in the same:
Story.

## 1. “And the Woman Fled”

The woman:
Flees.
There is urgency in the:
Language.
She does not remain where she:
Was.
She moves away from:
Danger.
And Scripture does not criticize her for:
Doing so.
Sometimes faith stands.
Sometimes faith:
Flees.
Wisdom is knowing which moment requires:

Which.

## 2. Flight Is Not Necessarily Faithlessness

There can be a strange assumption among Christians that courage always means remaining in one:
Place.
But Scripture gives us many examples of faithful people who:
Fled.
David fled from:
Saul.
Elijah fled from:
Jezebel.
Joseph took Mary and Jesus and fled to:
Egypt.
The early Christians sometimes fled:
Persecution.
Leaving danger is not automatically a failure of:
Faith.
Sometimes leaving is precisely how God preserves His:
People.

## 3. “Into the Wilderness”

And where does the woman:
Go?
Not to a:
Palace.
Not to a fortified:
City.
Not to a comfortable place of obvious:
Security.
Into the:
Wilderness.
That word carries an enormous biblical:
History.
And not all of it is:
Pleasant.

## 4. The Wilderness Is a Difficult Place

The wilderness can be:
Barren.
Lonely.
Uncertain.
Dangerous.
It is not where most people voluntarily choose to:
Live.
The wilderness strips away many of the things upon which people normally:

Depend.
And yet Scripture repeatedly takes God's people:
There.

## 5. Israel Knew the Wilderness

Israel left Egypt and entered the:
Wilderness.
There they experienced:
Hunger.
Thirst.
Fear.
Uncertainty.
Complaint.
Rebellion.
But they also experienced:
Provision.
Manna.
Water.
Guidance.
Presence.
The wilderness was difficult.
But God was:
There.

## 6. Elijah Knew the Wilderness

Elijah also discovered that God could provide in unlikely:
Places.
He went away from ordinary sources of:
Security.
And God sustained:
Him.
The place that appeared unable to support life became the place where God demonstrated His:
Provision.
That biblical pattern stands quietly behind John's:
Vision.

## 7. The Wilderness Can Be Both Danger and Refuge

That is one of the paradoxes of:
Scripture.
The wilderness is where danger may be:
Found.
And the wilderness is where danger may be:
Escaped.
It can be a place of testing.
And a place of:

Protection.
A place of scarcity.
And a place of:
Provision.
The location itself does not determine whether God is:
Present.

## 8. The Woman Does Not Wander Into the Wilderness

This is enormously:
Important.
John does not say the woman becomes:
Lost.
He does not say she wanders aimlessly until she happens upon a safe:
Place.
She has a:
Place.
And that place has been:
Prepared.
The wilderness may look uncertain to the:
Woman.
It is not uncertain to:
God.

## 9. "A Place Prepared of God"

There is the heart of the:
Verse.
Prepared by:
God.
Before she arrives—
God has:
Prepared.
Before she needs it—
God has:
Prepared.
Before the dragon turns his attention toward her—
God has:
Prepared.
She is entering unfamiliar territory.
God is:
Not.

## 10. God Is Already Ahead of the Woman

We often speak about asking God to go with us into difficult:
Places.
And that is certainly a proper:
Prayer.

But this verse gives us an even more comforting:
Picture.
God is not merely accompanying the woman into the:
Wilderness.
He has prepared something there before she:
Arrives.
She discovers that God has gone ahead of:
Her.

## 11. The Wilderness Is Not Evidence That God Lost Control

From the woman's perspective, the situation might appear:
Chaotic.
A dragon has appeared.
Her child has been taken away.
She is fleeing into the:
Wilderness.
Nothing about that looks:
Comfortable.
But heaven interprets the situation:
Differently.
There is a place:
Prepared.
What looks like desperate flight from one perspective is also divine provision from:
Another.

## 12. Sometimes God's Protection Does Not Look Like Protection

We usually imagine God's protection as the removal of:
Danger.
The dragon disappears.
The wilderness disappears.
The problem disappears.
But that is not what happens:
Here.
The woman still goes into the:
Wilderness.
God's protection does not eliminate the difficult:
Place.
It sustains her within:
It.

## 13. God Does Not Always Deliver Us From the Wilderness

Sometimes God delivers us:
From.
Sometimes God delivers us:
Through.
Israel walked through the:
Wilderness.
Elijah lived for a time within the:
Wilderness.
And the woman of Revelation is sustained in the:
Wilderness.
The presence of wilderness is not evidence of the absence of:
Grace.

## 14. “That They Should Feed Her There”

The woman is not merely:
Hidden.
She is:
Nourished.
That word changes the character of the:
Scene.
God does not simply keep her alive.
He provides what she:
Needs.
The place that looks barren becomes the place of:
Sustenance.

## 15. The Wilderness Cannot Prevent God From Providing

We look at circumstances and ask:
What could possibly sustain me here?
God looks at the wilderness and sees no shortage of:
Resources.
Israel saw desert.
God provided:
Manna.
Israel saw rock.
God provided:
Water.
The disciples saw five loaves and two fish.
Jesus saw enough to feed a:
Crowd.
God's provision is not limited by what our circumstances appear able to:
Supply.

## 16. Nourishment Does Not Mean Luxury

We should also notice what John does not:
Promise.
The woman is:
Nourished.
He does not say she is made:
Comfortable.
There is a difference.
God promises what is needed for the journey.
That may not always be the same thing as everything we would:
Prefer.
The wilderness remains the:
Wilderness.
But she has what she needs to:
Endure.

## 17. God Provides Enough for the Place He Has Prepared

There is something deeply pastoral:
Here.
If God has prepared the place—
God can provide what is necessary within the:
Place.
Not necessarily everything we:
Want.
Not necessarily according to the manner we would have:
Chosen.
But enough for faithful:
Endurance.
The wilderness does not surprise the God who prepared the:
Refuge.

## 18. "A Thousand Two Hundred and Threescore Days"

And then John gives us a familiar:
Number.
1,260:
Days.
We have seen this before.
In Chapter 11, God's witnesses prophesied for:
1,260 days.
And we already resisted the temptation to pull out our prophetic:
Calculator.
It remains safely in the:
Drawer.

## 19. The Number Connects the Woman With the Earlier Vision

The repetition is surely:
Significant.
The witnesses testify for 1,260:
Days.
The woman is nourished for 1,260:
Days.
Whatever additional symbolic or chronological significance the period may carry, John has deliberately repeated the same:
Measure.
The period of witness.
The period of preservation.
Both exist within a time God has:
Measured.

## 20. The Time Is Limited

Perhaps the clearest thing we can say about the number is also one of the most:
Important.
It has a:
Beginning.
And it has an:
End.
The wilderness does not last:
Forever.
The dragon does not receive unlimited:
Time.
The period has been:
Measured.
And anything measured has a:
Boundary.

## 21. Evil Has Time—Not Eternity

That distinction runs throughout:
Revelation.
Evil operates.
Evil persecutes.
Evil deceives.
Evil destroys.
But evil never receives:
Forever.
Only God is:
Eternal.

The dragon may have a season.
God has:
Eternity.
Never confuse temporary permission with ultimate:
Authority.

## 22. God Knows How Long the Wilderness Lasts

The woman may not know when the wilderness will:
End.
But the period is already:
Numbered.
That does not mean we should turn John's number into a calendar for predicting modern:
Events.
It means the wilderness is not open-ended from God's:
Perspective.
What feels indefinite to us is not indefinite to:
Him.

## 23. The Woman Is Preserved for a Purpose

God does not preserve His people merely so they can:
Hide.
The woman remains part of the unfolding:
Story.
The dragon will return.
Conflict will continue.
Her offspring will become part of the:
Vision.
Preservation serves God's continuing:
Purpose.
God sustains His people so that His people may continue to belong to Him and bear faithful:
Witness.

## 24. The Dragon Failed Against the Child—and God Provides for the Woman

Look back across the entire first movement.
The dragon waits for the:
Child.
The child is:
Born.
The dragon wants to devour:
Him.
The child reaches the:
Throne.

The woman enters the:
Wilderness.
And God has already prepared a place to:
Nourish her.
At every turn—
the dragon discovers that God was already:
Ahead of him.

## 25. God Was in the Wilderness Before She Arrived

Perhaps that is the sentence worth carrying from Verse: 6
The woman flees into a place she may never have chosen for:
Herself.
But when she arrives—
she discovers evidence that God has been there before:
Her.
A place has been:
Prepared.
Provision is already part of the:
Plan.
The wilderness may be unfamiliar to the:
Woman.
But there is nowhere God's people can go where God must arrive:
After them.

## Pastoral Reflection

Most of us would rather God keep us out of the:
Wilderness.
We would prefer the easier:
Road.
The safer:
Road.
The predictable:
Road.
And there is nothing wrong with praying for:
Deliverance.
But sometimes the answer to that prayer is not the removal of the:
Wilderness.
Sometimes it is a place prepared within:
It.
That distinction can change the way we understand difficult:
Seasons.
The wilderness may be:
Real.
The loneliness may be:
Real.

The uncertainty may be:
Real.
But none of those things prove God has abandoned:
Us.
Sometimes faith endures until God changes the:
Circumstances.
Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith endures all the way:
Home.
Revelation 12:6 adds another comforting truth.
Sometimes we enter the wilderness only to discover that God had already been there preparing what we would:
Need.

## Something Worth Pondering

The woman fled into the:
Wilderness.
If the verse stopped there, we might call it:
Tragedy.
But the sentence continues.
There was a:
Place.
Prepared by:
God.
Where she would be:
Nourished.
For a period God had already:
Measured.
The wilderness did not disappear.
But neither did God's:
Provision.
Perhaps one of the hardest lessons of faith is learning that God's presence does not always look like escape from difficult:
Places.
Sometimes it looks like discovering that the difficult place already contains evidence that God arrived before:
Us.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When I enter a wilderness I did not choose, do I immediately assume that God has abandoned me?

Can I look for the place God may already have prepared and the provision He may already be giving?
And can I trust that even when I do not know how long the wilderness will last, God does?

# War in Heaven

## Revelation 12:7–9

**“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”**
— Revelation 12:7–9, KJV

War in:
Heaven.
Those words sound almost:
Impossible.
Heaven is where we expect:
Peace.
Worship.
Glory.
The throne of:
God.
Yet John suddenly shows us:
Conflict.
Michael and his angels.
The dragon and his angels.
Two sides:
Fighting.
But we should notice something immediately.
John does not leave us wondering how the battle will:
End.
The dragon fights.
And the dragon:
Loses.
Again.

## 1. “There Was War in Heaven”

The scene changes:
Suddenly.
Verse 6 left the woman in the:
Wilderness.
Verse 7 takes us into:
Heaven.

But the conflict is not:
Different.
John is showing us another dimension of the same cosmic:
Struggle.
What happens upon earth cannot be understood completely by looking only at:
Earth.

## 2. Revelation Pulls Back the Curtain Again

This is one of the great purposes of apocalyptic:
Vision.
John shows us realities human eyes cannot ordinarily:
See.
The Church sees:
Persecution.
Empires.
Opposition.
Suffering.
Revelation says:
There is more happening than what you can see.
The earthly conflict participates in a deeper spiritual:
Conflict.

## 3. “Michael”

Now another figure enters the:
Vision.
Michael.
Unlike many figures in Revelation—
Michael is:
Named.
Scripture identifies Michael elsewhere as a significant angelic:
Figure.
Daniel speaks of:
Michael.
Jude speaks of:
Michael.
And here Michael leads angels in battle against the:
Dragon.

## 4. Michael Is Not God's Equal Either

There is something interesting about who fights the:
Dragon.
John does not describe God struggling against:
Satan.
The dragon is confronted by:
Michael.

An angelic being confronts an angelic:
Enemy.
That reinforces something we have already:
Said.
The dragon is not God's opposite:
Equal.
God does not need to enter some desperate contest for control of:
Heaven.
The dragon is a creature.
Not a rival:
God.

## 5. “Michael and His Angels”

Michael does not fight:
Alone.
He has:
Angels.
And the dragon also has:
Angels.
The conflict is larger than the human world John and his churches can:
See.
There are spiritual realities beyond ordinary human:
Perception.
But Revelation reveals them not to satisfy our curiosity about the invisible:
World.
It reveals them to strengthen faithful:
Endurance.

## 6. We Should Not Build More Than John Gives Us

This passage naturally raises many:
Questions.
When did this war occur?
Was it before creation?
At Satan's original rebellion?
During Christ's earthly ministry?
At the cross?
At the ascension?
Is John describing a past event, a theological reality, or something still connected with the unfolding vision?
Interpreters have answered those questions in different:
Ways.
John does not stop here to provide a detailed chronology of Satan's:
History.
So neither should:
We.

## 7. The Context Should Guide Us

What John does give us is a strong connection with the victory of:
Christ.
The child has just been taken to God and His:
Throne.
Immediately afterward—
war breaks out in:
Heaven.
And the proclamation that follows will celebrate victory through the blood of the:
Lamb.
That context should carry considerable interpretive:
Weight.
Whatever else this scene includes—
John connects the dragon's defeat with God's saving work in:
Christ.

## 8. “The Dragon Fought and His Angels”

The dragon does not surrender:
Quietly.
He fights:
Back.
Resistance continues.
That should sound familiar by:
Now.
The dragon opposed the:
Woman.
He waited for the:
Child.
Now he fights Michael and his:
Angels.
The dragon repeatedly:
Resists.
And repeatedly:
Fails.

## 9. Evil Is Persistent

Revelation does not portray evil as easily:
Discouraged.
Failure does not immediately end the dragon's:
Opposition.
He continues to:
Fight.
That persistence helps explain why faithful endurance remains:
Necessary.

The enemy may be defeated decisively without immediately becoming:
Inactive.

## 10. “And Prevailed Not”

There it:
Is.
One of the simplest sentences in the:
Passage.
They were:
Defeated.
John does not describe an uncertain:
Battle.
No suspenseful back-and-forth.
No suggestion that heaven barely:
Survives.
The dragon fights.
And loses.

## 11. The Dragon Is Becoming Familiar With Failure

Look at the pattern.
He waits to devour the:
Child.
Fails.
The child reaches the:
Throne.
The woman reaches the place God has:
Prepared.
Now the dragon fights in:
Heaven.
Fails:
Again.
The dragon looks increasingly terrifying.
And increasingly:
Defeated.
That is one of Revelation's great:
Ironies.

## 12. Appearance and Reality Continue to Separate

If we judged only by appearance—
the dragon would seem nearly:
Invincible.
Seven heads.
Ten horns.
Seven diadems.
Stars swept from heaven.
Angels following:

Him.
But Revelation keeps showing us the difference between:
Appearance—
and:
Reality.
The dragon looks powerful.
But he cannot secure the:
Victory.

## 13. “Neither Was Their Place Found Any More in Heaven”

The defeat has a:
Consequence.
The dragon and his angels lose their:
Place.
That language is striking.
No longer any:
Place.
Their presence is not merely challenged.
It is:
Removed.
The sphere from which the dragon operated is now closed to:
Him.

## 14. The Accuser Is Losing His Place

The verses immediately following will help explain why this:
Matters.
The dragon is not merely an enemy who:
Attacks.
He is also an:
Accuser.
The heavenly proclamation will speak of the accuser of God's people being thrown:
Down.
The loss of his place therefore has profound theological:
Meaning.
The accuser no longer occupies the position he once:
Held.

## 15. “The Great Dragon Was Cast Out”

Verse 3 introduced:
A great red dragon.
Verse 9 repeats:
The great dragon.
But now something has changed.

The adjective remains:
Great.
The position does:
Not.
He is thrown:
Down.
Great does not mean:
Unconquerable.
Powerful does not mean:
Ultimate.
Impressive does not mean:
Sovereign.

## 16. Now John Gives Us His Name

Until this point, John has shown us the:
Dragon.
Now he tells us who the dragon:
Is.
And he gives us several:
Names.
The ancient:
Serpent.
The:
Devil.
Satan.
The deceiver of the whole:
World.
Each description adds something to the:
Picture.

## 17. “That Old Serpent”

With those words—
John takes us all the way back toward:
Genesis.
The serpent.
Eden.
Temptation.
Deception.
Human rebellion.
The conflict of Revelation is not something that suddenly began during the Roman:
Empire.
John connects it with the ancient biblical story of humanity's:
Fall.
The dragon is an old:

Enemy.

## 18. The Serpent Has Become a Dragon

Genesis gives us a:
Serpent.
Revelation shows us a:
Dragon.
The imagery has grown.
The enemy who deceived in the garden now appears as the great adversary opposing God's:
People.
But despite the frightening change in appearance—
he remains what he has always:
Been.
An enemy of God's:
Purpose.

## 19. “Called the Devil”

Devil carries the sense of:
Slanderer.
One who falsely:
Accuses.
That identity will matter enormously in the next:
Verses.
The dragon's weapons are not merely violence and:
Power.
They include:
Accusation.
Slander.
The attempt to define God's people by the charges brought against:
Them.

## 20. “And Satan”

Satan means:
Adversary.
Opponent.
That is precisely what we have watched him:
Do.
He opposes the:
Woman.
Opposes the:
Child.
Opposes Michael.
Opposes God's:
People.
Opposition is woven into his:

Identity.
But being the adversary does not mean being the:
Victor.

## 21. “The Deceiver of the Whole World”

Now John identifies another characteristic:
Deception.
The dragon does not rely only upon:
Force.
He:
Deceives.
That may be one of his most dangerous:
Weapons.
Force can threaten the:
Body.
Deception can capture the:
Mind.
Revelation will show both methods at:
Work.

## 22. Deception Makes Falsehood Look Like Truth

That is what makes deception:
Dangerous.
A lie recognized as a lie has limited:
Power.
A lie believed to be truth can shape:
Lives.
Cultures.
Kingdoms.
Worship.
Allegiance.
The dragon's work is not merely to frighten the:
World.
It is to mislead the:
World.

## 23. “He Was Cast Out into the Earth”

The phrase is repeated for:
Emphasis.
Thrown:
Down.
The dragon does not voluntarily:
Leave.
He is:
Expelled.
The one who wanted to rule is:

Removed.
The one wearing diadems is:
Cast down.
The direction of the dragon's story is not:
Upward.
It is:
Down.

## 24. “His Angels Were Cast Out with Him”

The dragon's defeat extends to those aligned with:
Him.
His angels share his:
Fate.
Again, John gives us no detailed catalog of the heavenly hierarchy.
He does not satisfy every question we might have about the origin or organization of evil:
Spirits.
His emphasis is much simpler.
The dragon's side:
Loses.

## 25. Defeated Does Not Yet Mean Gone

And here we must hold two truths:
Together.
The dragon has been:
Defeated.
Thrown:
Down.
His place in heaven:
Lost.
But Chapter 12 is not:
Over.
His activity on earth will become even more:
Furious.
That is the tension within which God's people:
Live.
Victory has been:
Won.
But the defeated enemy still:
Rages.
Revelation does not deny either:
Truth.
And that is why faith must:
Endure.

## Pastoral Reflection

Sometimes the continued presence of conflict makes us wonder whether victory has really:
Occurred.
If Christ has won—
why does evil still:
Rage?
If the dragon has been defeated—
why does the Church still:
Suffer?
If the kingdom belongs to God—
why does the world still look so:
Broken?
Revelation does not ignore those:
Questions.
It places us directly inside:
Them.
The dragon is defeated.
And the dragon is still:
Dangerous.
Those truths exist together for a:
Time.
But they do not exist together:
Forever.
The dragon's activity continues.
His ultimate outcome does:
Not.
Faith therefore does not endure because we are uncertain whether God will eventually:
Win.
Faith endures because the victory of Christ gives us confidence while the remaining conflict continues to:
Rage.
We are not waiting to discover who wins.
We are learning how to remain faithful because we already know who:
Reigns.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon has seven heads.
Ten horns.
Seven diadems.
Angels fight alongside:
Him.
He looks terrifying.

And then Revelation gives us four wonderfully simple:
Words.
**They were defeated.**
Sometimes evil requires many words to describe how frightening it:
Looks.
And very few words to describe what happens when it encounters the authority of:
God.
The dragon fights.
The dragon loses.
The dragon is thrown:
Down.
He may still rage.
But he rages as a defeated:
Enemy.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When conflict continues, do I sometimes mistake continuing resistance for ultimate victory by the enemy?
Can I take evil seriously without giving it more authority in my imagination than Scripture gives it?
And when the dragon seems powerful, can I remember these simple words—they were defeated?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:7

**“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,”**
— Revelation 12:7, KJV

War.
In:
Heaven.
Those two words almost seem as though they should not belong in the same:
Sentence.
We think of heaven as the place of:
Peace.
Worship.
Glory.
The throne of:
God.
Yet John sees:
War.
Michael and his angels.
The dragon and his angels.
Two forces:
Engaged.
But before our imagination begins filling in details John has not:
Given—
we should notice what he actually wants us to:
See.
The conflict behind the conflict is:
Real.

## 1. “There Was War”

John's language is:
Direct.
War broke:
Out.
No long introduction.
No explanation of military:
Strategy.
No description of weapons.
Simply:
War.
The conflict we have been watching is now revealed on another:
Level.

## 2. “In Heaven”

That is the surprising:
Location.
Heaven.
John has repeatedly taken us between heaven and:
Earth.
Earth shows us persecution.
Suffering.
Empires.
Judgment.
Witness.
Heaven shows us the throne and the deeper reality surrounding what happens upon:
Earth.
Now heaven itself becomes the setting for:
Conflict.

## 3. The Visible Conflict Is Not the Whole Conflict

That may be one of the principal reasons John shows us this:
Scene.
The churches receiving Revelation could see their earthly:
Opposition.
They knew pressure.
They knew persecution.
They knew the power of:
Rome.
But Revelation says:
There is more happening than what you can:
See.
Earthly opposition participates in a deeper spiritual:
Conflict.

## 4. We Should Be Careful With “When”

This verse has generated an obvious:
Question.
When did this war in heaven:
Occur?
Before the creation of humanity?
At some ancient rebellion of:
Satan?
During the ministry of:
Jesus?
At the cross?
At the resurrection or:
Ascension?

Does John envision something future from his own:
Perspective?
Different interpreters have answered differently.
John does not place a date beside the:
Battle.
So neither will:
We.

## 5. The Immediate Context Matters

Although John does not give us a detailed chronology, he does give us a:
Context.
The child has just been:
Born.
The child has been taken to God and His:
Throne.
Then—
war breaks out in:
Heaven.
And the proclamation following the battle will speak of victory through the blood of the:
Lamb.
That makes the victory of Christ central to how John understands the dragon's:
Defeat.
We should allow that connection to stand without forcing the vision into a timetable John does not:
Provide.

## 6. “Michael”

Now John introduces someone by:
Name.
Michael.
This is not the first appearance of Michael in:
Scripture.
Daniel speaks of:
Michael.
Jude speaks of:
Michael.
And here Revelation shows Michael engaged in battle against the:
Dragon.
John assumes Michael belongs within the heavenly realm of God's:
Servants.

## 7. Michael Is a Servant—Not the Center

It would be easy to become fascinated with:
Michael.

Angels naturally attract:
Curiosity.
But Michael is not the center of:
Revelation.
The:
Lamb is.
Michael serves within the purposes of:
God.
Even an extraordinary angel remains a:
Servant.
Revelation never redirects worship away from God toward His:
Messengers.

## 8. Michael Fights the Dragon

This is a fascinating:
Detail.
God is not pictured struggling hand-to-hand against:
Satan.
Michael fights the:
Dragon.
That alone should caution us against imagining Satan as God's equal opposite:
Number.
The dragon is not another:
God.
He is a rebellious creature operating beneath the sovereignty of the:
Creator.

## 9. Revelation Is Not Cosmic Dualism

There are not two eternal powers struggling to determine which one will control:
Reality.
Good and evil are not equal forces balanced against one:
Another.
God is:
God.
The dragon is:
Not.
The conflict is real.
But the contestants are not ultimately:
Equal.
That distinction matters enormously for Christian:
Hope.

## 10. “Michael and His Angels”

Michael is accompanied by:

Angels.
Heaven contains servants of God carrying out God's:
Purposes.
Throughout Revelation angels have:
Worshiped.
Announced.
Sounded trumpets.
Poured bowls.
Delivered messages.
And now some are shown:
Fighting.
The heavenly world is active within God's unfolding:
Purpose.

## 11. Angels Are Not the Point of the Passage

Revelation tells us enough to know that angelic beings participate in the:
Conflict.
It does not give us an organizational chart of:
Heaven.
Ranks.
Divisions.
Battle formations.
Assignments.
We might find such information:
Interesting.
John apparently did not find it necessary for faithful:
Endurance.
That should tell us something about where our attention belongs.

## 12. "Against the Dragon"

There is no ambiguity about the:
Opponent.
The dragon introduced in Verse 3 now becomes the object of heavenly:
Resistance.
He stood before the woman.
He sought the:
Child.
Now Michael and his angels stand against:
Him.
The dragon may oppose God's purposes.
But he does not operate without:
Opposition.

## 13. The Dragon Has Angels Too

John says:
The dragon and his angels.

Verse 4 told us that the dragon swept a third of the stars from:
Heaven.
We deliberately refused to say that Verse 4 explicitly identified those stars as fallen:
Angels.
Here John does explicitly tell us that the dragon has:
Angels.
That distinction matters.
We allow the clearer passage to say what the clearer passage:
Says.

## 14. Scripture Gives Us a Spiritual Conflict

We should not remove the supernatural dimension from:
Revelation.
John clearly believes there are spiritual beings aligned in rebellion against:
God.
The dragon is not merely an abstract symbol for human:
Badness.
There is genuine spiritual:
Opposition.
At the same time—
that opposition often works through earthly:
Powers.
Revelation will soon make that connection unmistakably:
Clear.

## 15. “Fought Against”

The language is:
Active.
Michael and his angels:
Fight.
The dragon and his angels:
Fight.
This is not merely disagreement.
It is:
Conflict.
John wants us to understand the seriousness of the spiritual struggle surrounding God's redemptive:
Purpose.

## 16. “The Dragon Fought and His Angels”

There is something revealing in those:
Words.
The dragon fights:
Back.
Again we see the dragon as:

Reactive.
God's purposes move.
The dragon:
Opposes.
The child is enthroned.
The dragon:
Fights.
Evil resists what God is:
Doing.
But resistance is not the same as:
Control.

## 17. Evil Does Not Surrender Easily

The dragon has already:
Failed.
He could not devour the:
Child.
The child reached the:
Throne.
Yet the dragon continues to:
Fight.
Failure does not immediately end his:
Resistance.
That explains something about the world in which God's people must:
Endure.
A defeated enemy may still be a dangerous:
Enemy.

## 18. Resistance Does Not Mean the Outcome Is Uncertain

This is an important distinction.
We often interpret continuing conflict as evidence that the final outcome remains:
Undecided.
Revelation does:
Not.
The dragon continues fighting.
But heaven is not anxiously wondering who will:
Win.
The kingdom has already been:
Proclaimed.
The child is already at the:
Throne.
Conflict continues inside an outcome God has already:
Secured.

## 19. The Battle Is Real Without Being Ultimate

That may sound contradictory.
It is:
Not.
The battle matters.
The suffering matters.
The opposition matters.
Faithfulness matters.
But none of those things mean God's sovereignty is hanging in the:
Balance.
The conflict is:
Real.
God's reign is:
Ultimate.
Both truths belong together.

## 20. The Church's Struggle Has a Larger Context

John's churches could easily have believed their troubles were merely:
Local.
A hostile official.
A difficult city.
Economic pressure.
Social exclusion.
Imperial expectations.
But Revelation widens the:
Lens.
Their faithfulness participates in something much:
Larger.
The conflict between the kingdom of God and everything opposed to:
It.

## 21. That Does Not Mean Every Human Opponent Is a Demon

Here we should be:
Careful.
Recognizing spiritual conflict does not give Christians permission to label every person who disagrees with them:
Demonic.
People are not the:
Dragon.
Human opponents remain people Christ calls His followers to:
Love.
Revelation exposes spiritual evil without giving the Church permission to dehumanize human:

Beings.

## 22. Spiritual Warfare Is Primarily About Allegiance

Revelation's great question is repeatedly:
Whom will you worship?
The Lamb?
Or the powers opposed to:
Him?
Whose mark?
Whose name?
Whose kingdom?
Whose authority?
The deepest battle is ultimately about:
Allegiance.
Who receives our:
Worship.

## 23. The Church Is Not Told to Fight the Dragon the Way Michael Does

That is another important:
Observation.
Michael and his angels fight the dragon in:
Heaven.
But when Revelation describes how believers overcome, the weapons will look very:
Different.
The blood of the:
Lamb.
The word of their:
Testimony.
Faithfulness even in the face of:
Death.
The Church does not conquer by becoming another:
Dragon.

## 24. Heaven Fights—The Church Bears Witness

That distinction will become clearer in the verses immediately:
Ahead.
God's people are called to faithful:
Witness.
Not domination.
Not coercion.
Not answering evil with the same methods evil:
Uses.
The Lamb conquered through self-giving:

Faithfulness.
His people follow the:
Lamb.
That is how Revelation understands Christian:
Victory.

## 25. Verse 7 Ends Before the Outcome

And once again John lets a verse end with unresolved:
Tension.
Michael and his angels:
Fight.
The dragon and his angels fight:
Back.
If we stopped here—
we might wonder what happens:
Next.
But we have learned something by now.
Never build our theology from the verse where the battle is still:
Raging.
Keep:
Reading.
Verse 8 is coming.
And the first thing Verse 8 will tell us is not that the battle continued indefinitely.
It will tell us:
They were defeated.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are seasons when all we can see is the:
Battle.
Prayer feels like a battle.
Faithfulness feels like a battle.
Relationships feel like a battle.
Simply getting through another day can feel like a:
Battle.
And when we are standing inside the conflict, continuing resistance can begin to feel like evidence that nothing has been:
Won.
Revelation 12:7 reminds us that conflict and victory can exist within the same:
Story.
The dragon fights back.
That does not mean the dragon will:
Win.
Opposition continues.

That does not mean God's purposes have:
Failed.
Sometimes faith must endure precisely because the battle has not yet caught up with the victory God has already:
Declared.
We do not deny the battle.
We simply refuse to make the battle larger than the:
Throne.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon fights:
Back.
Perhaps those three words explain more of Christian experience than we might initially:
Think.
Christ reigns.
The dragon fights:
Back.
The gospel advances.
The dragon fights:
Back.
God's people bear witness.
The dragon fights:
Back.
But fighting back is not the same thing as:
Winning.
Sometimes resistance is simply what a defeated enemy does before his defeat becomes fully:
Visible.
And Verse 8 is about to make that very:
Clear.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When opposition continues, do I automatically assume that God must be losing ground?
Can I recognize spiritual conflict without turning human beings into enemies I am permitted to hate?
And when I find myself living in the middle of the battle, can I remember that the battle is not the same thing as the outcome?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:8

**“And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.”**
— Revelation 12:8, KJV

Verse 7 gave us the:
Battle.
Verse 8 gives us the:
Outcome.
And John does not need many words to tell:
Us.
They were:
Defeated.
The dragon fought.
His angels fought.
The conflict was:
Real.
But the outcome was not:
Ambiguous.
They:
Lost.

## 1. “And”

The verse continues the account of the battle with a decisive:
Outcome.
“And prevailed not.”
The dragon and his angels fought:
Back—
**but** they were:
Defeated.
The preceding verse describes what the dragon:
Attempted.
This verse describes what actually:
Happened.
The dragon's resistance does not determine the:
Outcome.

## 2. “Prevailed Not”

John's statement is remarkably:
Simple.
No detailed description of the:
Battle.
No catalog of heavenly:
Weapons.

No account of tactics.
No dramatic blow-by-blow:
Narrative.
Just the result.
They were:
Defeated.
Perhaps John wants our attention on the outcome rather than our curiosity about the: Mechanics.

## 3. Revelation Does Not Create Suspense About Who Wins

That has been true throughout the:
Book.
John shows us terrifying:
Things.
Judgment.
Persecution.
Death.
Abyss.
Beast.
Dragon.
But Revelation is not a mystery novel in which we must reach the final chapter to discover who:
Wins.
The throne was occupied in Chapter: 4
The Lamb was standing in Chapter: 5
The kingdom was proclaimed in Chapter: 11
And now the dragon is:
Defeated.

## 4. The Dragon Fought—And Still Lost

This matters.
The dragon did not lose because he failed to:
Try.
Verse 7 told us he fought:
Back.
He resisted.
He opposed.
He brought his angels into the:
Conflict.
And still—
they were:
Defeated.
Effort does not create sovereignty.
Resistance does not guarantee:

Victory.

## 5. The Dragon's Power Has Limits

We have seen those limits repeatedly.
He could not prevent the child's:
Birth.
He could not devour the:
Child.
He could not prevent the child from reaching the:
Throne.
And now he cannot win the battle in:
Heaven.
The dragon is dangerous.
But danger should never be confused with:
Omnipotence.

## 6. Defeat Exposes the Difference Between Appearance and Reality

The dragon looks:
Impressive.
Seven heads.
Ten horns.
Seven diadems.
Angels aligned with:
Him.
But appearances can:
Deceive.
Especially when the one appearing is himself the great:
Deceiver.
Revelation keeps pulling back the curtain and saying:
Look again.
What appears unstoppable is:
Not.

## 7. Evil Can Be Loud and Still Be Losing

That is worth:
Remembering.
Noise can sound like:
Power.
Rage can look like:
Control.
Resistance can appear to be:
Success.
But Revelation refuses to measure reality by how loudly evil:
Roars.

The dragon fights.
He makes war.
He accuses.
He deceives.
And he:
Loses.

## 8. “Neither Was Their Place Found Any More”

Their defeat produces a decisive:
Change.
There is no longer any:
Place.
The dragon and his angels lose their position in:
Heaven.
They are not merely pushed to another corner.
Their place is:
Gone.
The conflict changes because their access changes.

## 9. Place Matters in Revelation

Revelation frequently uses location to communicate theological:
Reality.
The throne.
The altar.
The temple.
The earth.
The sea.
The abyss.
The wilderness.
And now—
no place in:
Heaven.
The dragon's movement is not toward greater:
Authority.
It is toward increasing:
Exclusion.

## 10. The Dragon Is Losing Ground

Notice the direction of the:
Story.
The child goes:
Up—
to God and His throne.
The dragon goes:
Down.
That contrast is deliberate.

Christ is:
Enthroned.
The dragon is:
Expelled.
One ascends to the place of:
Rule.
The other loses the place he once:
Occupied.

## 11. The Accuser Is Being Removed

Verse 10 will soon explain another dimension of this:
Scene.
The dragon is the accuser of God's:
People.
He accuses them day and:
Night.
So losing his place in heaven means more than losing territory.
The:
Accuser—
loses his standing.
The voice that condemns God's people does not possess unlimited access:
Forever.

## 12. The Courtroom Echo Is Important

The language of accusation invites us to think in terms of a heavenly:
Court.
Charges are:
Made.
God's people are:
Accused.
But the accuser's place is being:
Removed.
And the answer to accusation will not ultimately be the perfection of the:
Accused.
It will be the blood of the:
Lamb.
That becomes explicit in the verses ahead.

## 13. The Gospel Changes the Accuser's Position

This is why the context of Christ's victory matters so:
Much.
The child has reached the:
Throne.
The Lamb has been:
Slain.
And the accuser loses his:

Place.
Christian assurance does not rest upon the claim that God's people have never:
Sinned.
It rests upon what God has done in:
Christ.
The accuser may speak.
But he no longer controls the:
Verdict.

## 14. Accusation Is Not the Same as Condemnation

That distinction matters pastorally.
An accusation may be:
True.
An accusation may be:
False.
An accusation may contain enough truth to make us feel:
Crushed.
But accusation does not possess the authority to pronounce the final:
Sentence.
The final word belongs to:
God.
And the gospel tells us what God has done for sinners through:
Christ.

## 15. The Dragon's Voice Is Not God's Voice

We should be careful here.
Conviction and accusation are not necessarily the same:
Thing.
God's Spirit can expose sin and call us toward:
Repentance.
That truth leads toward:
Grace.
The accuser seeks to use guilt to drive us toward:
Despair.
One says:
Come back.
The other says:
There is no way back.
Those are very different:
Voices.

## 16. “No Longer”

Those two words matter.
No:
Longer.

They imply a decisive change in:
Status.
Something that once characterized the situation does not characterize it:
Now.
Revelation repeatedly shows us history moving toward God's intended:
Conclusion.
The dragon's sphere becomes increasingly:
Restricted.

## 17. Evil Is Being Driven Toward Its End

The dragon's story has a:
Direction.
And it is not toward:
Victory.
Thrown down.
Restricted.
Defeated.
Eventually:
Destroyed.
Revelation may take many chapters to show us the full:
Outcome.
But the trajectory is already:
Clear.
Evil is moving toward its:
End.

## 18. Defeat Does Not Mean Immediate Disappearance

Yet we must keep another truth beside:
That.
The dragon is defeated in:
Heaven.
But he will become dangerously active upon the:
Earth.
That may seem:
Contradictory.
It is not.
A defeated enemy can still cause enormous:
Damage.
That is why Revelation continues calling God's people to:
Endurance.

## 19. We Live in the Tension Between Defeat and Removal

That may describe the Christian experience remarkably:
Well.
Christ has won the decisive:
Victory.

Yet evil remains:
Active.
Sin remains.
Death remains.
Suffering remains.
The dragon still:
Rages.
But none of those things possess the future:
Forever.
Their defeat has been secured even while their final removal is still:
Coming.

## 20. Continuing Conflict Does Not Reverse the Verdict

This is important.
When the dragon continues his activity upon the earth, we should not conclude that Verse 8 has somehow been:
Cancelled.
The verdict remains:
Defeated.
His rage does not overturn:
That.
His activity does not reverse:
That.
His apparent successes do not change:
That.
The outcome of the heavenly battle remains:
Settled.

## 21. Sometimes Defeated Enemies Become More Desperate

We will see exactly that as Chapter 12:
Continues.
The dragon's remaining time is:
Short.
And because he knows it—
his fury becomes:
Great.
That explains something important.
Increased opposition does not always mean the enemy has gained:
Ground.
Sometimes desperation grows because ground has been:
Lost.

## 22. The Church Must Not Interpret Rage as Sovereignty

The dragon will:

Rage.
But rage is not:
Sovereignty.
He will persecute.
But persecution is not:
Sovereignty.
He will deceive.
But deception is not:
Sovereignty.
He will make war.
But war is not:
Sovereignty.
The throne belongs to:
Another.

## 23. The Dragon Has No Permanent Place

Perhaps that is the deepest contrast in the:
Verse.
The dragon loses his:
Place.
But God's people are repeatedly promised a place in God's:
Presence.
The woman has a place prepared in the:
Wilderness.
The faithful belong before the:
Throne.
And eventually God's dwelling will be with:
Humanity.
The dragon loses his place.
God prepares a place for His:
People.

## 24. The Enemy's Future Is Shrinking

At first the dragon seems enormous.
But watch what Revelation keeps doing to his:
World.
His plans fail.
His access narrows.
His place disappears.
His time becomes:
Short.
His defeat becomes:
Certain.
The frightening dragon is being progressively enclosed by the sovereignty of:
God.

## 25. Four Words Interpret the Battle

After everything we have seen—
perhaps four words are enough:
**They were defeated.**
Those words do not mean evil is:
Harmless.
They do not mean suffering is:
Imaginary.
They do not mean the battle was:
Unnecessary.
They mean the battle does not determine the final:
Outcome.
The dragon may fight.
But he cannot create a place for himself where God has declared there is no place: Left.

## Pastoral Reflection

Sometimes we measure victory by whether the struggle has:
Stopped.
If temptation returns—
we think nothing has:
Changed.
If opposition continues—
we think nothing has been:
Won.
If the old accusing voice speaks again—
we think perhaps it still possesses the same authority it always:
Did.
Revelation teaches us to measure things:
Differently.
The dragon can still:
Speak.
Still:
Rage.
Still:
Fight.
And still be:
Defeated.
That matters when the battle lasts longer than we:
Expected.
Continuing struggle is not necessarily evidence of continuing:
Defeat.
Sometimes faith must endure in the space between a victory already secured and a victory not yet fully:

Seen.
The dragon's activity may continue for a:
Time.
But his place is already:
Shrinking.
And his ending has already been:
Written.

## Something Worth Pondering

Verse 7 needed an entire scene to describe the:
Battle.
Michael.
Angels.
Dragon.
Angels.
War in:
Heaven.
Verse 8 needs only a few words to tell us the:
Outcome.
They were:
Defeated.
Perhaps that imbalance is intentional.
The battle may feel:
Long.
Complicated.
Frightening.
Exhausting.
But the final verdict does not have to be:
Complicated.
The dragon fights.
God:
Wins.
And there is no permanent place in God's renewed creation for everything that opposes:
Him.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Have I mistaken the continuation of a struggle for evidence that the enemy has not been defeated?
When accusation speaks loudly, do I give that voice an authority God has not given it?
And when the battle feels complicated, can I hold onto the wonderfully uncomplicated verdict—

they were defeated?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:9

**“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”**
— Revelation 12:9, KJV

Now John gives the dragon a:
Name.
Several names, in:
Fact.
The great:
Dragon.
The ancient:
Serpent.
The:
Devil.
Satan.
The deceiver of the whole:
World.
The terrifying creature we first saw standing before the woman is no longer:
Anonymous.
John wants us to know exactly who stands behind the:
Image.
But something else is repeated almost as insistently as the dragon's:
Identity.
He was thrown:
Down.
His angels were thrown:
Down.
The dragon has names.
He has power.
He has followers.
But the direction of his story is unmistakably:
Down.

## 1. “The Great Dragon”

John begins with the description we already:
Know.
The great:
Dragon.
He remains:
Great.

His defeat does not mean John suddenly describes him as:
Harmless.
The enemy is still dangerous.
Still powerful.
Still capable of terrible:
Destruction.
But Verse 8 has already interpreted the adjective for:
Us.
Great—
and:
Defeated.
Those truths can exist together.

## 2. "Was Cast Out"

Before John gives us another name, he tells us what happened to the:
Dragon.
He was thrown:
Down.
Not invited to:
Leave.
Not persuaded to:
Withdraw.
Not allowed to negotiate another:
Position.
Thrown:
Down.
The language is forceful because the defeat is:
Decisive.

## 3. The Dragon Does Not Control His Own Destination

That is worth:
Noticing.
The dragon makes choices.
He rebels.
He fights.
He deceives.
He accuses.
But here—
someone else determines where he will:
Go.
The one who wants to control the world cannot even control his own:
Expulsion.
That tells us something about the limits of his:
Authority.

## 4. “That Old Serpent”

Now John reaches backward through the entire biblical:
Story.
The dragon is the ancient:
Serpent.
Suddenly Revelation and Genesis stand beside one:
Another.
The serpent who appears near the beginning of Scripture reappears near its:
End.
The conflict is:
Ancient.
The enemy is:
Old.
But ancient does not mean:
Eternal.
Only God is:
Eternal.

## 5. Eden Comes Into View

The phrase naturally takes us back to the:
Garden.
Humanity surrounded by God's good:
Creation.
A command.
A serpent.
A question.
A lie.
A choice.
And then:
Brokenness.
John wants us to recognize that the conflict he is showing us did not begin with:
Rome.
Its roots reach much farther:
Back.

## 6. The Serpent's First Great Weapon Was Deception

The serpent did not enter Eden carrying a:
Sword.
He entered with a:
Question.
“Yea, hath God said?”
The attack came through:
Deception.
God's word was questioned.

God's character was distorted.
God's motives were made to appear:
Suspicious.
And humanity believed the:
Lie.
That pattern has not disappeared.

## 7. The Serpent Has Become a Dragon

Genesis shows us a:
Serpent.
Revelation shows us a:
Dragon.
The imagery has become more:
Terrifying.
What appeared subtly in the garden is now revealed in its full destructive:
Character.
But the essential nature of the enemy has not:
Changed.
He still opposes what God:
Creates.
Still attacks what God:
Loves.
Still deceives those made in God's: Image.

## 8. The Bible's Story Is More Connected Than It First Appears

Genesis and Revelation are separated by the entire biblical:
Story.
Yet Revelation repeatedly takes us back to the:
Beginning.
Creation.
Serpent.
Tree of life.
Human rebellion.
And eventually—
new creation.
The Bible begins with creation corrupted by evil.
It ends with creation renewed and evil finally:
Removed.
The ancient serpent belongs to that entire:
Story.

## 9. “Called the Devil”

John gives another:
Name.

The:
Devil.
The word carries the idea of:
Slanderer.
One who brings false accusation.
One who attacks through:
Charges.
That becomes especially important because the very next verse will identify him as the accuser of God's:
People.
Deception and accusation belong together in the dragon's:
Work.

## 10. The Slanderer Attacks Identity

Accusation can be one of the most destructive weapons human beings:
Experience.
You are what you:
Did.
You are your worst:
Failure.
You cannot be:
Forgiven.
You cannot be:
Restored.
God could never want someone like:
You.
Accusation takes sin and attempts to turn it into a permanent:
Identity.
The gospel says something very:
Different.

## 11. Conviction and Accusation Are Not the Same Thing

This distinction is pastorally:
Important.
God's Spirit can expose our:
Sin.
Conviction says:
This is wrong.
Turn back.
Come home.
Receive:
Grace.
Accusation says:
You are finished.
There is no way:

Back.
There is no:
Grace.
One calls us toward:
Repentance.
The other drives us toward:
Despair.
We should learn to recognize the:
Difference.

## 12. “And Satan”

Then John gives another familiar:
Name.
Satan.
The:
Adversary.
The opponent.
The one who stands:
Against.
That is precisely what we have watched him do throughout this:
Chapter.
Against the:
Woman.
Against the:
Child.
Against Michael.
Against God's:
Purpose.
He is the:
Adversary.
But being the adversary does not make him the:
Equal.

## 13. Satan Is Not God's Opposite

We need this guardrail again because popular imagination sometimes gets it:
Wrong.
God on one side.
Satan on the:
Other.
Two great supernatural powers locked in eternal:
Combat.
That is not the biblical:
Picture.
God is the:
Creator.

Satan is a:
Creature.
God is eternal.
Satan is:
Not.
God is sovereign.
Satan is:
Limited.
The conflict is real.
The contestants are not:
Equal.

## 14. “The Deceiver”

John now tells us what the dragon:
Does.
He:
Deceives.
This may be one of the most dangerous descriptions in the entire:
Verse.
Because deception works best when the deceived person does not realize deception is:
Happening.
A threat recognized as a threat can be:
Resisted.
A lie believed to be truth becomes much more:
Dangerous.

## 15. Deception Distorts Reality

The deceiver does not have to create a new:
World.
He merely needs people to misunderstand the one in which they:
Live.
Call evil:
Good.
Call good:
Evil.
Call bondage:
Freedom.
Call selfishness:
Love.
Call idolatry:
Worship.
Call the creature:
God.
Deception changes allegiance by changing what people believe to be:

True.

## 16. “Of the Whole World”

The scope is:
Enormous.
The whole:
World.
John is not describing a minor local:
Problem.
The dragon's deceptive influence reaches across human:
Society.
Cultures.
Kingdoms.
Systems.
Peoples.
Nations.
No society should assume itself automatically immune from:
Deception.

## 17. That Should Make Christians Humble

There is a temptation to read “the deceiver of the whole world” and immediately begin identifying everyone else who has been:
Deceived.
Them.
Those people.
That group.
That nation.
That church.
But if deception is one of the dragon's great weapons, humility should be part of Christian:
Wisdom.
We should also ask:
Where might I be believing something that is not:
True?

## 18. Truth Matters Because Deception Matters

Christian faith is deeply concerned with:
Truth.
Not merely winning:
Arguments.
Not merely proving someone else:
Wrong.
Truth matters because lies enslave.
Jesus described Himself as the:
Truth.
The gospel announces what God has actually done in:

Christ.
The answer to deception is not louder deception from the other:
Side.
It is faithful witness to the:
Truth.

## 19. “He Was Cast Out into the Earth”

John repeats the statement:
Again.
He was thrown:
Down.
The repetition gives the verse a sense of:
Finality.
John does not want us to miss what has:
Happened.
The dragon's sphere has been:
Restricted.
Heaven is no longer his:
Place.

## 20. The Direction Is Always Down

Watch the movement.
The child is taken to God's:
Throne.
The dragon is thrown:
Down.
Christ is:
Exalted.
The adversary is:
Expelled.
One moves toward the throne.
The other away from:
It.
Revelation is telling the story spatially as well as:
Theologically.

## 21. Down Does Not Yet Mean Gone

But we must be:
Careful.
The dragon is thrown to the:
Earth.
He has not yet been removed from the story:
Entirely.
In fact, his activity upon the earth is about to become more:
Intense.
The dragon has lost his place in heaven.

But God's people will still experience his:
Rage.
Defeat does not yet mean:
Disappearance.

## 22. A Defeated Enemy Can Still Be Dangerous

That tension is essential for understanding Christian:
Endurance.
The dragon is:
Defeated.
And still:
Dangerous.
Christ is:
Victorious.
And God's people still:
Suffer.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
And the world still contains:
Conflict.
Revelation refuses to sacrifice either side of that:
Tension.

## 23. “His Angels Were Cast Out with Him”

The dragon does not fall:
Alone.
His angels share his:
Defeat.
Verse 7 showed them fighting beside:
Him.
Verse 9 shows them falling with:
Him.
Alignment has:
Consequences.
Those who participate in the dragon's rebellion participate in the dragon's:
Fall.

## 24. The Dragon's Kingdom Is a Falling Kingdom

This is easy to miss when evil appears:
Powerful.
The dragon has angels.
Crowns.
Influence.
Deceptive reach across the:
World.
But Revelation shows us the direction of his:

Kingdom.
It is:
Falling.
Its apparent strength cannot reverse its ultimate:
Destination.
The kingdom of God is coming.
The kingdom of the dragon is:
Collapsing.

## 25. Now We Know Who the Enemy Is—and What Has Happened to Him

John has removed the:
Mask.
The dragon is:
The ancient serpent.
The Devil.
Satan.
The deceiver of the whole:
World.
That sounds terrifying.
But John surrounds those names with something even more:
Important.
Thrown:
Down.
Thrown:
Down.
Thrown down with:
Him.
The enemy has many:
Names.
But none of them is:
King.

## Pastoral Reflection

Sometimes giving something a name helps us understand what we are actually dealing:
With.
Revelation does that in Verse: 9
The enemy:
Deceives.
The enemy:
Accuses.
The enemy:
Opposes.
Those realities still matter in Christian:

Life.
We encounter lies about:
God.
Lies about:
Ourselves.
Lies about what gives life meaning.
And sometimes the most destructive voice is the one that takes our genuine failures and whispers that grace could never possibly reach:
Us.
But Revelation tells us something else about that:
Voice.
It has been thrown:
Down.
The accuser is not the:
Judge.
The deceiver does not determine what is:
True.
The adversary does not determine how the story:
Ends.
We do not defeat accusation by pretending we have never:
Failed.
We answer it by remembering who sits upon the:
Throne.
The Lamb who was slain.
The Savior who tells the truth about our sin—
and still offers:
Grace.

## Something Worth Pondering

John gives the enemy several names.
Dragon.
Ancient serpent.
Devil.
Satan.
Deceiver.
Each name sounds:
Powerful.
But none of those names describes his final:
Destination.
For that, John uses a:
Verb.
Thrown:
Down.
Perhaps that is worth remembering when evil seems larger than:

Life.
The enemy may have many names.
Many strategies.
Many ways of frightening God's:
People.
But he has only one ultimate:
Direction.
Down.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When accusation speaks, do I mistake the voice of the accuser for the voice of God?
Am I willing to ask not only where others may be deceived, but where I may need God's truth to correct me?
And when the enemy appears powerful, can I remember that Revelation identifies him not only by who he is—
but by what has already happened to him?
He was thrown down.

# The Victory Proclaimed

## Revelation 12:10–12

**“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.**

> **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.**
>
> **Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”**

— Revelation 12:10–12, KJV

The dragon has been:
Thrown down.
And heaven:
Speaks.
Not with uncertainty.
Not with speculation.
Not with fear about what might happen:
Next.
With:
Proclamation.
Salvation.
Power.
Kingdom.
Authority.
Victory.
But then Revelation tells us something extraordinary.
God's people conquer the dragon:
Too.
Not with swords.
Not with armies.
Not with political power.
Not by becoming stronger versions of the:
Dragon.
They conquer through the blood of the:
Lamb.

Through the word of their:
Testimony.
And through faithfulness that refuses to abandon Christ even when faithfulness costs:
Everything.
Here we come very near the heart of what Revelation means when it calls the Church to:
Endure.

## 1. “I Heard a Loud Voice Saying in Heaven”

John:
Hears.
The battle has been seen.
Now its meaning must be:
Explained.
Revelation repeatedly does this.
Vision gives us the:
Picture.
Heaven gives us the:
Interpretation.
And the voice is:
Loud.
What follows is not whispered speculation.
It is heavenly:
Proclamation.

## 2. “Now Is Come”

The announcement begins with:
Now.
Something decisive has:
Happened.
The dragon has been:
Thrown down.
The victory of Christ has changed the:
Situation.
John's language carries the force of something that has arrived and become:
Effective.
Heaven announces what the dragon's defeat:
Means.

## 3. “The Salvation”

First:
Salvation.
Revelation's story is not fundamentally about:
Destruction.
It is about God's work of:

Redemption.
The judgments matter.
The conflict matters.
The dragon matters.
But none of those things occupies the:
Center.
God's saving work does.

## 4. “And Strength”

Then:
Power.
We have seen many displays of apparent power throughout:
Revelation.
Imperial power.
Military power.
Economic power.
Demonic power.
The dragon's power.
But heaven announces the power that finally:
Matters.
The power of:
God.

## 5. “And the Kingdom of Our God”

There is that word:
Again.
Kingdom.
Chapter 11 already announced:
“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.”
Now Chapter 12 echoes the same:
Reality.
The dragon may wear:
Diadems.
But the kingdom belongs to:
God.
Appearance does not determine:
Ownership.

## 6. “And the Power of His Christ”

The child of Verse 5 was destined to rule the:
Nations.
Now heaven announces the authority of God's:
Messiah.
The dragon sought to destroy the:
Child.

Instead—
the child is at the throne.
And His authority is being:
Proclaimed.
The dragon's failure could hardly be more:
Complete.

## 7. Salvation, Power, Kingdom, Authority

Listen to the four words:
Together.
Salvation.
Power.
Kingdom.
Authority.
They belong to:
God—
and His:
Messiah.
Everything the dragon pretends to possess ultimately belongs somewhere:
Else.
He may imitate authority.
He may exercise temporary power.
He may claim kingdoms.
But heaven tells us where ultimate authority actually:
Resides.

## 8. “For the Accuser”

Now heaven explains why this proclamation can be:
Made.
The accuser has been:
Thrown down.
Verse 9 called him:
Dragon.
Serpent.
Devil.
Satan.
Deceiver.
Now another description comes forward:
Accuser.
His activity includes bringing charges against God's:
People.

## 9. “Of Our Brethren”

Notice how heaven describes those being:
Accused.
Our brothers and:

Sisters.
Not anonymous:
Defendants.
Not disposable:
Failures.
Members of the family of:
Faith.
The accuser may define them by their charges.
Heaven identifies them by their:
Relationship.
They belong among God's:
People.

## 10. “Which Accused Them before Our God Day and Night”

The accusation is:
Relentless.
Day and:
Night.
The language portrays continual:
Accusation.
No rest.
No shortage of:
Charges.
The enemy does not merely tempt people into sin.
He then uses sin as material for:
Accusation.
First:
Fall.
Then hear:
You can never get back up.
That is the cruelty of the: Accuser.

## 11. “Before Our God”

But notice where the accusations are:
Made.
Before:
God.
And that is precisely where the accuser ultimately:
Fails.
Because the accuser does not control the:
Court.
He does not sit upon the:
Throne.
He does not pronounce the final:

Verdict.
The Judge is:
God.
And the Lamb has already been:
Slain.

## 12. “And They Overcame Him”

Then comes one of the most astonishing statements in:
Revelation.
**They have conquered him.**
Who?
God's faithful:
People.
The dragon has been defeated in heaven—
and believers participate in that:
Victory.
But Revelation's definition of conquest is about to overturn nearly everything the world normally means by:
Winning.

## 13. “By the Blood of the Lamb”

First—
the blood of the:
Lamb.
Not their own:
Strength.
Not their own:
Goodness.
Not their flawless:
Record.
Not their ability to answer every accusation.
They conquer because the Lamb has:
Died.
Their victory begins with:
His.

## 14. The Lamb's Blood Answers the Accuser

This is where accusation meets the:
Gospel.
The answer to the accuser is not:
I have never sinned.
The answer is not:
I have earned my innocence.
The answer is:
The Lamb was slain.

The blood of the Lamb means the accuser does not possess the final word concerning those who belong to:
Christ.
Grace does.

## 15. The Cross Is Not Defeat

Once again Revelation turns worldly definitions upside:
Down.
A crucified Messiah looks:
Defeated.
A slain Lamb looks:
Powerless.
Blood looks like evidence that violence has:
Won.
Revelation says:
Look again.
The blood of the Lamb is precisely how the victory was:
Won.
The dragon misjudged the:
Cross.

## 16. "And by the Word of Their Testimony"

But the Lamb's people also have something to:
Do.
They:
Testify.
They speak faithfully about what God has done in:
Christ.
Their witness does not create the:
Victory.
Their witness bears testimony to the victory already accomplished by the:
Lamb.
That distinction matters.

## 17. Testimony Is More Than Words

In Revelation, testimony is not merely saying the correct:
Sentence.
It is a life aligned with the:
Lamb.
Words.
Actions.
Allegiance.
Worship.
Endurance.
The testimony of Jesus becomes visible in people who refuse to surrender their loyalty to:

Him.

## 18. The Church Conquers by Witness

Here Revelation gives us the Church's method of:
Victory.
Not coercion.
Not domination.
Not revenge.
Not becoming more frightening than the:
Dragon.
Witness.
The Church conquers by faithfully telling and living the truth about:
Jesus.
That may look weak to the:
World.
So did the:
Cross.

## 19. “They Loved Not Their Lives”

Now the verse becomes deeply:
Costly.
They did not cling to life.
That does not mean life has no:
Value.
Christianity does not glorify:
Death.
Life is God's:
Gift.
But there is something more important than preserving life at any:
Cost.
Faithfulness to:
Christ.

## 20. “Unto the Death”

Here is endurance taken to its furthest:
Point.
These believers remain faithful even when the alternative is:
Death.
The dragon possesses one of the world's greatest weapons:
Fear.
Especially fear of:
Death.
But what happens when people believe resurrection belongs to the:
Lamb?
The dragon's greatest threat begins losing its:
Power.

## 21. The Dragon Can Kill—and Still Lose

That is Revelation's shocking definition of:
Victory.
The world says:
If they kill you, you lost.
Revelation says:
Not necessarily.
If someone remains faithful to Christ even unto death—
the dragon may destroy the:
Body.
But he has failed to capture the person's:
Allegiance.
The martyr dies.
And the martyr:
Conquers.

## 22. This Is What "When Faith Must Endure" Means

Here we stand near the heart of our entire:
Journey.
Faith does not endure because suffering is:
Easy.
Faith does not endure because God's people are:
Invulnerable.
Faith does not endure because every earthly circumstance turns out the way we:
Want.
Faith endures because the Lamb has:
Conquered.
And those who belong to the Lamb can remain faithful even when the dragon seems to have taken:
Everything.
Sometimes faith endures until God changes the:
Circumstances.
Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith endures all the way:
Home.

## 23. "Therefore Rejoice, Ye Heavens"

Verse 12 begins with:
Joy.
Rejoice.
Heaven understands what has:
Happened.
The accuser has been:

Thrown down.
The Lamb has:
Conquered.
God's people share in that:
Victory.
There is reason for heaven to:
Celebrate.

## 24. “Woe to the Inhabiters of the Earth and of the Sea”

Then the tone changes:
Immediately.
Rejoice—
but:
Woe.
Victory in heaven produces intensified conflict upon the:
Earth.
The devil has been thrown:
Down.
And the defeated enemy is:
Angry.
This is the strange tension of the present:
Age.
Heaven celebrates victory.
Earth still experiences:
War.

## 25. “Because He Knoweth That He Hath but a Short Time”

And there is the final:
Irony.
The dragon:
Knows.
He knows something God's suffering people may sometimes:
Forget.
His time is:
Short.
His wrath is great.
His time is:
Short.
His violence may be terrible.
His time is:
Short.
His opposition may feel endless.
His time is:
Short.

The dragon rages not because he possesses the future—
but because he knows he:
Doesn't.

## Pastoral Reflection

Perhaps nowhere in Revelation do we see Christian victory defined more clearly than:
Here.
The world teaches us to recognize victory by:
Survival.
Power.
Control.
Influence.
Dominance.
Revelation points toward a:
Lamb.
A Lamb who was:
Slain.
Then Revelation points toward people who follow that:
Lamb.
They overcome through His blood.
Through their testimony.
Through faithfulness that death itself cannot:
Break.
That is a very different kind of:
Victory.
It means there may be moments when faithfulness looks like losing to everyone who is:
Watching.
The faithful witness may lose position.
Security.
Reputation.
Freedom.
Perhaps even:
Life.
And heaven may say:
Conqueror.
Because Revelation does not measure victory by what the dragon can take:
Away.
It measures victory by what the dragon cannot:
Take.
Faith.
Testimony.
Allegiance to:

Christ.
The Church does not endure because it can silence every:
Accuser.
It endures because it knows whose voice will have the final:
Word.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon has frightening:
Weapons.
Deception.
Accusation.
Persecution.
Violence.
Death.
And Revelation gives God's people three things:
The blood of the:
Lamb.
The word of their:
Testimony.
Faithfulness even unto:
Death.
From the world's perspective, that may look terribly:
Unequal.
A dragon against a:
Witness.
Violence against:
Testimony.
Death against:
Faith.
But Revelation has already taught us not to judge by:
Appearance.
The Lamb who was slain is:
Standing.
And those who follow the Lamb conquer the same way He:
Did.
Not by becoming dragons.
But by remaining faithful to the:
Lamb.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When I think about Christian victory, do I define it more by the world's standards or by the Lamb?

When accusation speaks, am I trusting my own record—or the blood of Christ?
And if faithfulness becomes costly, do I believe deeply enough in the victory of the Lamb to keep bearing my testimony?
Even when faith must:
Endure?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:10

**“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”**
— Revelation 12:10, KJV

The battle has been:
Fought.
The dragon has been:
Defeated.
The accuser has been:
Thrown down.
And now heaven tells us what all of this:
Means.
Salvation.
Power.
Kingdom.
Authority.
Four enormous:
Words.
And every one of them points away from the:
Dragon—
and toward:
God.

## 1. “And I Heard”

John has just:
Seen.
Now he:
Hears.
That pattern matters in:
Revelation.
Sometimes John sees something and then hears words that help us understand what he has:
Seen.
The vision gives us the:
Image.
The proclamation gives us its:
Meaning.

## 2. “A Loud Voice”

This is not a:

Whisper.
The voice is:
Loud.
Revelation repeatedly uses loud voices when something of great importance is being:
Announced.
Heaven wants this proclamation to be:
Heard.
The dragon may roar.
But the dragon is not the loudest voice in:
Revelation.

## 3. Heaven Interprets the Battle

If we interpreted the conflict only from:
Earth—
we might reach the wrong:
Conclusion.
Earth sees persecution.
Martyrdom.
Suffering.
Opposition.
Death.
Heaven sees:
Salvation.
Power.
Kingdom.
Authority.
Revelation repeatedly teaches us to see earthly circumstances from heaven's:
Perspective.

## 4. “Now”

The proclamation begins with:
Now.
Something decisive has:
Happened.
The word gives the announcement a sense of:
Arrival.
The victory of God is not merely something reserved for a distant:
Future.
Something has already changed through the work of:
Christ.
The kingdom's final fullness is still coming.
But its decisive victory has already entered the:
Story.

## 5. “Now Is Come”

That phrase deserves to be heard:
Carefully.
John does not say:
Perhaps they will come.
He does not say:
We hope they come.
He hears heaven proclaim:
Now have come.
Revelation's confidence rests not upon optimistic predictions about human:
History.
It rests upon what God has accomplished through:
Christ.

## 6. “The Salvation”

First:
Salvation.
That is where heaven begins.
Not destruction.
Not vengeance.
Not even judgment.
Salvation.
The purpose of God revealed through the Lamb is fundamentally:
Redemptive.
Revelation may contain terrifying images.
But terror is not the heart of the:
Book.
The Lamb is.

## 7. Salvation Belongs to God

Revelation has already made this:
Clear.
The great multitude cried:
“Salvation to our God.”
Salvation does not belong to:
Empire.
Military strength.
Economic power.
Human achievement.
Or religious:
Performance.
Salvation belongs to:
God.

## 8. “And Strength”

Then comes:
Power.
Power is one of Revelation's great:
Questions.
Who actually has:
It?
The emperor?
The beast?
The dragon?
The nations?
From an earthly perspective, those forces can look:
Overwhelming.
Heaven says:
Look again.
The power that ultimately determines history belongs to:
God.

## 9. Revelation Redefines Power

The world often measures power by the ability to:
Control.
Compel.
Threaten.
Destroy.
Dominate.
But Revelation places at the center of history a:
Lamb.
A Lamb who was:
Slain.
God's power is revealed in ways the world often mistakes for:
Weakness.
The cross itself becomes the great example.

## 10. “And the Kingdom of Our God”

Then:
Kingdom.
We have heard this before.
Chapter 11 announced:
The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah.
Now heaven announces:
The kingdom of our God.
The two scenes belong:
Together.
Chapter 11 proclaimed the kingdom.

Chapter 12 pulls back the curtain and shows us the conflict behind that:
Proclamation.

## 11. The Dragon Has Diadems—God Has the Kingdom

That contrast should not be:
Missed.
The dragon appeared wearing:
Diadems.
Symbols of claimed:
Authority.
But wearing crowns does not make the kingdom:
His.
Revelation distinguishes between claimed authority and ultimate:
Authority.
The dragon may display the symbols of rule.
The kingdom still belongs to:
God.

## 12. "Our God"

There is something beautifully personal in those:
Words.
Our:
God.
This is not merely a cosmic theological:
Statement.
It is the confession of a:
People.
The God whose kingdom is being proclaimed is the God to whom they:
Belong.
The conflict may be cosmic.
The relationship is:
Personal.

## 13. "And the Power of His Christ"

Now heaven turns directly toward:
Christ.
His:
Messiah.
The Anointed:
One.
The child of Verse 5 was destined to rule all the:
Nations.
Now His authority is:
Proclaimed.
The dragon tried to destroy the child.
Instead—

the child's authority becomes the subject of heaven's:
Celebration.

## 14. The Dragon Could Not Stop the Messiah

Think of everything the dragon attempted.
He waited before the:
Woman.
He intended to devour the:
Child.
He fought in:
Heaven.
And after all that effort—
the Messiah still:
Reigns.
Evil can oppose God's purpose.
It cannot finally:
Overturn it.

## 15. Salvation, Power, Kingdom, Authority

Put the four words together:
Again.
Salvation.
Power.
Kingdom.
Authority.
They form a declaration about who actually governs:
Reality.
Not the dragon.
Not the empire.
Not the accuser.
God—
and His:
Messiah.
That is the theological center of the:
Proclamation.

## 16. “For the Accuser”

Now the voice explains why this announcement is being:
Made.
For the:
Accuser—
has been thrown:
Down.
John gives us another description of the enemy.
Verse 9 emphasized:
Deceiver.

Verse 10 emphasizes:
Accuser.
The dragon attacks both:
Truth—
and:
Identity.

## 17. The Accuser's Weapon Is Condemnation

Accusation says:
Look what you have:
Done.
Look what you:
Were.
Look how badly you:
Failed.
Look how unworthy you:
Are.
And some of those accusations may contain painful:
Truth.
God's people are not:
Sinless.
The gospel does not require us to pretend that we:
Are.
The gospel gives us a better answer.

## 18. The Answer Is Not Our Perfect Record

This becomes crucial as we approach Verse: 11
God's people do not conquer because they can answer the accuser:
I have never done anything:
Wrong.
They conquer because of the blood of the:
Lamb.
Our defense is not our flawless:
Performance.
Our hope is God's:
Grace.
The accuser points toward our sin.
The gospel points toward the:
Lamb.

## 19. “Of Our Brethren”

Notice the language heaven uses for those being:
Accused.
Brothers and:
Sisters.
The accuser describes them by their:

Failures.
Heaven describes them by their:
Belonging.
They are part of God's:
People.
Their identity is not finally determined by the charges brought against:
Them.

## 20. Accusation Tries to Rename Us

That is one of accusation's cruelest:
Works.
Failed.
Unworthy.
Hopeless.
Unforgivable.
Finished.
The accuser wants the worst thing we have done to become the name by which we understand:
Ourselves.
Grace refuses to let the accuser have the final word over our:
Identity.

## 21. “Day and Night”

The accusation is:
Relentless.
Day and:
Night.
There is something exhausting about the:
Image.
Always another charge.
Another reminder.
Another:
Accusation.
Some people know exactly what that feels:
Like.
The past becomes a courtroom that never:
Adjourns.
But Revelation announces that the accuser himself has been:
Removed.

## 22. “Before Our God”

The accuser brings his charges before:
God.
But there is one enormous problem for the:
Accuser.
God is not:

Him.
The accuser does not sit upon the:
Throne.
He does not determine the:
Verdict.
He does not decide who receives:
Grace.
The Judge is also the God who gave the: Lamb.

## 23. The Accuser Has Been Thrown Down

This is the great reversal.
The one bringing accusations against God's people is himself:
Expelled.
The prosecutor loses his:
Place.
The voice attempting to condemn God's people does not possess eternal:
Standing.
The accuser accuses.
God:
Saves.
And salvation has the final:
Word.

## 24. The Gospel Does Not Say the Accusations Never Matter

We need to keep our pastoral balance:
Here.
Grace does not mean sin is:
Irrelevant.
When we sin—
we repent.
We confess.
We seek forgiveness.
We make things right where we:
Can.
But repentance is different from living forever beneath:
Condemnation.
The gospel tells the truth about what we have done without allowing what we have done to become more powerful than what Christ has:
Done.

## 25. The Accuser Does Not Get the Final Word

That may be the great pastoral truth of Verse: 10
The accuser:
Speaks.

Sometimes loudly.
Sometimes relentlessly.
Sometimes with accusations painfully close to the:
Truth.
But the accuser does not get the final:
Word.
The final word belongs to the God of:
Salvation.
Power.
Kingdom.
And to the authority of His:
Messiah.
The accuser has been:
Thrown down.
And now Verse 11 will tell us why God's people can:
Conquer.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are people who have lived for years beneath the voice of:
Accusation.
Sometimes the voice comes from:
Others.
Sometimes it comes from our own:
Memory.
And sometimes it sounds so convincing that we mistake it for the voice of:
God.
You failed.
You knew better.
You should have been stronger.
God could never use you again.
God could never forgive:
That.
But conviction and condemnation are not the same:
Thing.
The Loving Father tells us the truth about our sin because He wants to bring us:
Home.
The accuser tells us about our sin because he wants us to believe there is no home to return:
To.
Revelation 12:10 tells us which voice has lost its:
Place.
The accuser has been thrown:
Down.

Our failures may be real.
Our need for repentance may be real.
The consequences of our choices may be:
Real.
But none of those things makes the accuser:
King.
Salvation belongs to:
God.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
Authority belongs to:
Christ.
And the Judge who sees His people most clearly is also the Savior who loves His people most:
Deeply.
His judgment tells the truth about what we are.
His grace refuses to leave us:
There.

## Something Worth Pondering

The accuser works:
Day and night.
That sounds almost:
Tireless.
But heaven does not respond by saying God's people must become better at arguing with:
Him.
Heaven announces:
Salvation.
Power.
Kingdom.
Authority.
Perhaps sometimes we spend too much time trying to answer every accusation ourselves.
Revelation points us somewhere:
Else.
Toward the:
Lamb.
The accuser may know our:
Failures.
But the Lamb knows our:
Names.
And the accuser does not determine the:
Verdict.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Is there an accusation from my past that I have allowed to become my identity?
Can I distinguish the Father's call to repentance from the accuser's attempt to drive me into despair?
And when accusation speaks, can I remember who actually possesses salvation, power, kingdom, and authority?
Not the accuser.
God—
and His Messiah.

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:11

**“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”**
— Revelation 12:11, KJV

There may be no verse in Revelation that better explains what it means for faith to:
Endure.
The dragon is:
Real.
The accusation is:
Real.
The persecution is:
Real.
And death itself is:
Real.
Yet John says something astonishing about ordinary faithful believers:
They have:
Conquered.
Not merely:
Survived.
Not merely:
Endured.
Conquered.
And then Revelation tells us:
How.
By the blood of the:
Lamb.
By the word of their:
Testimony.
And by a faithfulness that even death could not:
Break.
If we want to understand what victory looks like in Revelation—
we need to stay here for a:
While.

## 1. “But They”

Verse 10 spoke about the:
Accuser.
He accused God's people day and:
Night.
Then Verse 11 begins:

But they.
The accuser has his:
Activity.
God's people have their:
Answer.
And notice who becomes the subject of the:
Sentence.
They:
Conquered.
The people who were being accused are now described as:
Conquerors.

## 2. "They Overcame Him"

That is an extraordinary:
Statement.
The dragon.
The ancient serpent.
The Devil.
Satan.
The deceiver of the whole world.
The accuser.
And God's people have:
Conquered him.
The people who appear vulnerable upon earth are described as victorious in:
Heaven.
Once again—
Revelation tells us:
Look again.

## 3. Revelation Has Been Preparing Us for This Word

Conquering is not new language in:
Revelation.
Jesus repeatedly told the seven churches:
"To him that overcometh…"
Those promises were not invitations to military:
Victory.
They were calls to faithful:
Endurance.
Hold fast.
Remain faithful.
Do not compromise.
Keep bearing:
Witness.
Now Chapter 12 shows us what conquering looks like when the conflict reaches its deepest:

Point.

## 4. Revelation Redefines Victory

The world usually recognizes victory by who remains:
Standing.
Who controls the:
Territory.
Who possesses the:
Power.
Who defeats the:
Opponent.
Who survives.
Revelation gives us another:
Definition.
A believer can lose everything the world calls victory—
and still:
Conquer.
That is one of the most radical claims in the:
Book.

## 5. "By the Blood of the Lamb"

Everything begins:
Here.
The blood of the:
Lamb.
Not the strength of the:
Saints.
Not their courage.
Not their theological:
Knowledge.
Not their moral:
Perfection.
Not their ability to defeat Satan through superior spiritual:
Technique.
The foundation of their victory is something Christ has already:
Done.

## 6. Their Victory Begins With His Victory

Before there is their:
Testimony—
there is His:
Blood.
Before there is their:
Faithfulness—
there is His:
Faithfulness.

Before they:
Conquer—
the Lamb has:
Conquered.
Christian endurance never begins with what we can accomplish for:
God.
It begins with what God has accomplished for us in:
Christ.

## 7. The Lamb Was Slain

Revelation introduced Jesus in Chapter 5 as the Lamb standing as though:
Slain.
That image has never disappeared from the:
Book.
The Lamb conquers through sacrificial:
Death.
The world sees slaughter.
Heaven sees:
Victory.
The world sees weakness.
Heaven sees:
Power.
The world sees defeat.
Heaven sees the Lamb:
Standing.

## 8. The Cross Is the Great Reversal

Nothing exposes the difference between heaven's perspective and the world's perspective more clearly than the:
Cross.
Rome saw another condemned man:
Executed.
Religious authorities saw a dangerous problem:
Removed.
The disciples initially saw their hope:
Destroyed.
But God was accomplishing:
Redemption.
The place that looked most like defeat became the place where victory was being:
Won.

## 9. The Dragon Misjudged the Cross

The dragon has repeatedly misjudged God's:
Ways.
He waited to devour the:

Child.
He failed.
He fought in:
Heaven.
He failed.
And the cross itself reveals the deepest mistake of:
Evil.
Evil assumes that killing ends the:
Story.
God answers with:
Resurrection.
The dragon understands death.
He does not understand what God can do on the other side of:
It.

## 10. The Blood Answers the Accuser

Verse 10 described Satan as the:
Accuser.
Verse 11 immediately points us toward the blood of the:
Lamb.
That connection matters.
The answer to accusation is not:
I have never sinned.
The answer is not:
I am good enough.
The answer is not:
My record is better than someone else's.
The answer is:
The Lamb was slain.
The accuser points toward our:
Sin.
Faith points toward:
Christ.

## 11. Grace Does Not Pretend We Are Innocent

The gospel does not require dishonesty about our:
Failures.
We have:
Sinned.
We have failed.
We have hurt others.
We have sometimes known what was right and chosen something:
Else.
Grace does not call evil:
Good.

Grace says something far more:
Wonderful.
Sin does not get the final:
Word.
The blood of the Lamb does.

## 12. The Accuser Cannot Out-Argue the Cross

Imagine every accusation being:
Listed.
Every failure.
Every regret.
Every secret.
Every moment we wish we could:
Undo.
The gospel does not respond by erasing the:
Record.
It points toward:
Calvary.
The cross says God already knows the full truth about human:
Sin.
And He loved us:
Anyway.
The accuser cannot reveal something to God that God did not already:
Know.

## 13. "And by the Word of Their Testimony"

Now the verse moves from what Christ has:
Done—
to what His people:
Do.
They:
Testify.
The Lamb's blood is the foundation.
Their testimony is the:
Witness.
They tell the truth about:
Jesus.
And they refuse to stop telling it when telling it becomes:
Costly.

## 14. Testimony Is Not Merely Talking About Ourselves

When we hear testimony, we may think primarily about telling the story of our own:
Experience.
There is certainly a place for:
That.

But Revelation's emphasis is larger.
Their testimony concerns their allegiance to:
Jesus.
Who He is.
What He has done.
Why He alone deserves:
Worship.
Their lives become witnesses to the truth of the:
Lamb.

## 15. Testimony Must Be Spoken

There is a verbal dimension to:
Witness.
The Church has something to:
Say.
Jesus is:
Lord.
The Lamb was:
Slain.
Christ is:
Risen.
God's kingdom is:
Coming.
The dragon is:
Defeated.
The gospel cannot remain merely an internal private:
Conviction.
Witness eventually finds a:
Voice.

## 16. Testimony Must Also Be Lived

But words alone are not enough.
A testimony contradicted by our lives becomes difficult to:
Hear.
Revelation joins testimony with:
Faithfulness.
What believers say about Jesus is demonstrated by how they live when allegiance to Jesus becomes:
Costly.
Their lives give weight to their:
Words.

## 17. The Church Conquers by Telling the Truth

The dragon is the:
Deceiver.
How does the Church confront:

Deception?
With:
Truth.
The dragon lies.
The Church:
Testifies.
The dragon distorts reality.
The Church bears witness to the reality revealed in:
Christ.
This is spiritual warfare in profoundly Christian:
Form.

## 18. The Church Does Not Conquer by Becoming the Dragon

This deserves to be said as clearly as we:
Can.
The dragon uses:
Fear.
Coercion.
Violence.
Deception.
Accusation.
The Church does not overcome those things by becoming better at:
Them.
We do not defeat deception with:
Deception.
We do not defeat hatred with:
Hatred.
We do not defeat domination by becoming better:
Dominators.
The Church follows the:
Lamb.

## 19. The Lamb Determines the Method of Victory

This is why Revelation keeps Jesus before:
Us.
The Lion conquers as the:
Lamb.
The Lamb conquers through faithful:
Sacrifice.
And His people conquer by following the same:
Pattern.
The method cannot be separated from the:
Messiah.
If our way of winning requires us to stop looking like Jesus—

we should question what we mean by:
Winning.

## 20. Witness Is Not Weakness

From the world's perspective, testimony may seem terribly:
Weak.
What can words accomplish against an:
Empire?
What can faithfulness accomplish against:
Violence?
What can a witness accomplish against a:
Dragon?
Revelation's answer is:
Conquer.
Never confuse gentleness with:
Powerlessness.
Never confuse faithfulness with:
Weakness.

## 21. “They Loved Not Their Lives”

Now John takes us deeper.
They did not cling to:
Life.
This does not mean they despised:
Life.
Life is God's:
Gift.
Jesus healed.
Jesus restored.
Jesus raised the:
Dead.
Christian faith does not celebrate death for death's:
Sake.
Something else is being said here.

## 22. They Would Not Preserve Life at the Price of Allegiance

There are things more important than staying alive at any:
Cost.
For these believers, one of them was faithfulness to:
Christ.
If preserving life required denying the:
Lamb—
they would not pay that:
Price.

Their allegiance had a value greater than their instinct for self:
Preservation.

## 23. Faithfulness Had Become More Precious Than Safety

That is difficult for comfortable Christianity to:
Hear.
We naturally value:
Safety.
Security.
Comfort.
Stability.
There is nothing inherently wrong with any of:
Those.
But Revelation asks what happens when safety and faithfulness move in opposite:
Directions.
Which one will we:
Choose?

## 24. “Unto the Death”

John takes the question to its absolute:
Limit.
Death.
The dragon can threaten:
Death.
The empire can impose:
Death.
Persecutors can inflict:
Death.
But there is something they cannot:
Do.
They cannot force a faithful disciple to stop belonging to:
Christ.
Allegiance can be surrendered.
It cannot finally be:
Taken.

## 25. Death Is the Dragon's Greatest Threat

Death seems like the ultimate:
Weapon.
What threat could be greater than:
That?
Do what I demand—
or:
Die.
For most human systems of coercion, that is the final:

Card.
But Christianity makes an astonishing claim.
Jesus has already passed through:
Death.
And came out the other:
Side.

## 26. Resurrection Changes the Meaning of Threat

If death is the:
End—
then death possesses enormous:
Power.
But if Christ is:
Risen—
death is no longer the final:
Word.
That does not make death painless.
It does not make grief:
Unreal.
It does not make martyrdom something Christians should recklessly:
Seek.
It means death cannot separate God's people from the victory of: Christ.

## 27. The Dragon Can Kill the Witness Without Silencing the Testimony

That is the paradox.
The witness may:
Die.
And the testimony may become even:
Louder.
The empire may believe execution has ended the:
Witness.
Heaven may declare that the witness has:
Conquered.
Earth and heaven can look at the same event and reach completely different:
Conclusions.
Revelation teaches us which perspective tells the deeper:
Truth.

## 28. Martyrdom Is Not Failure

This mattered profoundly to Revelation's first:
Readers.
Some believers had already:
Died.
Others could face:

Persecution.
The natural question would be:
If God reigns, why did His faithful servant die?
Revelation answers:
Do not confuse death with:
Defeat.
The Lamb was slain.
And the Lamb is:
Standing.

## 29. Conquering May Look Like Losing

This is perhaps the most difficult reversal in:
Revelation.
The believer may lose:
Position.
Possessions.
Freedom.
Reputation.
Security.
Life.
And heaven may still say:
Conqueror.
Because heaven measures victory by:
Faithfulness.
Not merely by earthly:
Outcome.

## 30. Faith Endures Because the Lamb Has Already Won

And here we arrive at the heart of our entire:
Journey.
**When Faith Must Endure.**
Why does faith:
Endure?
Not because believers are naturally:
Strong.
Not because suffering becomes:
Easy.
Not because circumstances always:
Improve.
Not because every prayer receives the answer we:
Wanted.
Faith endures because the Lamb has already:
Conquered.
Our endurance rests inside:
His victory.

## 31. Sometimes Faith Endures All the Way Home

We have said this before because some truths deserve to be:
Repeated.
Sometimes faith endures until God changes the:
Circumstances.
Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith endures all the way:
Home.
Verse 11 gives us biblical permission to say that without calling the final possibility:
Defeat.
If faith remains—
the dragon has:
Lost.

## 32. The Dragon Cannot Take What We Refuse to Give Him

The dragon may take many:
Things.
Comfort.
Security.
Possessions.
Freedom.
Perhaps even:
Life.
But there is one thing he cannot simply:
Seize.
Faithful allegiance to:
Christ.
That must be:
Surrendered.
And these believers refused to surrender:
It.

## 33. Their Victory Was Not That They Survived

This distinction may be the heart of the:
Verse.
They conquered—
not because they escaped:
Death.
They conquered because death could not make them abandon the:
Lamb.
That is an entirely different definition of:

Victory.
The dragon could take their lives.
He could not take their:
Faith.
And therefore—
he:
Lost.

## 34. The Lamb, the Testimony, and the Life

Notice the three movements of the:
Verse.
The blood of the:
Lamb.
The word of their:
Testimony.
Their willingness to remain faithful even unto:
Death.
Christ's work.
Their witness.
Their endurance.
That is Revelation's portrait of a conquering:
Church.

## 35. This Is the Church the Dragon Cannot Defeat

Not necessarily the largest:
Church.
Not the wealthiest.
Not the most politically:
Connected.
Not the most culturally:
Influential.
Not the church with the most impressive:
Building.
The church the dragon cannot finally defeat is the church that remains faithful to the:
Lamb.
Take everything else.
If the testimony remains—
the Church still:
Conquers.

## 36. The Final Word Is Not Death

The verse ends with:
Death.
But the story does:
Not.

That may be the most important thing we can say.
Never put a period where God has placed a:
Comma.
The martyrs die.
But Revelation keeps:
Going.
The faithful suffer.
But Revelation keeps:
Going.
The dragon rages.
But Revelation keeps:
Going.
And eventually—
death itself will be:
Gone.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are passages we:
Study.
And there are passages that study:
Us.
Revelation 12:11 is one of:
Those.
It asks what we really mean when we say:
Victory.
If God changes our circumstances—
we call that:
Victory.
If the disease is healed—
victory.
If the door opens—
victory.
If the problem disappears—
victory.
If the person survives—
victory.
And thank God for every one of those:
Moments.
We should celebrate them.
We should pray for them.
We should never become so spiritual that we pretend earthly deliverance does not:
Matter.

But Revelation will not allow us to make earthly deliverance the only definition of:
Victory.
Because sometimes the faithful are not:
Released.
Sometimes the suffering does not:
Stop.
Sometimes the witness costs:
Everything.
And heaven still says:
They conquered.
That does not make suffering good.
It does not make death good.
Death remains an:
Enemy.
But even the enemy of death has been placed beneath the victory of the:
Lamb.
So Christian endurance is not gritting our teeth and pretending nothing:
Hurts.
It is holding onto Christ when everything:
Hurts.
It is continuing to testify when silence would be:
Safer.
It is refusing to let accusation define:
Us.
It is refusing to let deception redirect:
Us.
It is refusing to let fear determine our:
Allegiance.
And if the dragon eventually reaches for the last weapon he possesses—
Death—
the Christian can look beyond even:
That.
Because the Lamb has already been:
There.
And the Lamb came out the other:
Side.
That is why faith can:
Endure.
Not because death is small.
But because Jesus is:
Alive.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon has:
Power.
The believers have:
Testimony.
The dragon threatens:
Death.
The believers follow a Lamb who was:
Slain.
On paper—
the dragon appears to have every:
Advantage.
But heaven announces that the believers:
Conquered.
Why?
Because the dragon misunderstood what victory:
Was.
He thought victory meant making them:
Afraid.
They kept:
Testifying.
He thought victory meant making them:
Compromise.
They remained:
Faithful.
He thought victory meant taking their:
Lives.
They trusted the Lamb beyond:
Death.
And suddenly the dragon discovers something terrifying.
His greatest weapon cannot force the faithful to surrender their:
Allegiance.
He can kill them.
And still:
Lose.
That may be the deepest meaning of Christian:
Endurance.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Do I define victory primarily by whether God gives me the earthly outcome I want?

When accusation comes, am I resting in my own record—or in the blood of the Lamb?
Does my life reinforce the testimony my lips give about Jesus?
And if faithfulness ever costs more than I expected to pay—
do I believe that nothing the dragon can take from me is greater than what the Lamb has already promised me?
Because sometimes faith endures until circumstances:
Change.
Sometimes faith endures when they do:
Not.
And sometimes—
faith endures all the way:
Home.

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:12

**“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”**
— Revelation 12:12, KJV

Rejoice.
And:
Woe.
Two words that seem almost impossible to place beside one:
Another.
Heaven:
Rejoices.
Earth is:
Warned.
The dragon has been:
Defeated.
And the dragon is:
Furious.
Victory has been:
Won.
And conflict still:
Continues.
Welcome to the tension in which faithful people are called to:
Endure.

## 1. “Therefore Rejoice”

The verse begins with:
Joy.
Rejoice.
Not:
Be afraid.
Not:
Prepare for the worst.
Not:
Wonder whether God will win.
Rejoice.
Heaven understands what has just:
Happened.
The accuser has been:
Thrown down.

## 2. “Therefore”

That little word connects the joy directly with what came:
Before.
The accuser has been:
Defeated.
God's people have:
Conquered.
The blood of the Lamb has answered the:
Accuser.
Their testimony has remained:
Faithful.
Therefore:
Rejoice.
Heaven's joy has a:
Reason.

## 3. “Ye Heavens”

The invitation reaches across the heavenly:
Realm.
You:
Heavens.
The place from which the dragon has been expelled now becomes the place of:
Celebration.
The enemy's removal produces:
Joy.
What once contained accusation now rings with:
Praise.

## 4. “Ye That Dwell in Them”

Heaven's inhabitants are called to:
Rejoice.
Why?
Because the dragon no longer has a place among:
Them.
The accuser has been:
Removed.
His defeat changes the character of the heavenly:
Scene.
The battle gives way to:
Celebration.

## 5. Heaven Sees the Victory Clearly

This contrast matters.
Heaven:

Rejoices.
Earth will soon experience:
Woe.
Why the difference?
Not because heaven and earth have different:
Outcomes.
But because they occupy different places within the unfolding:
Conflict.
Heaven sees clearly what earth may struggle to:
Believe.
The dragon is:
Defeated.

## 6. Heaven Celebrates What Earth Has Not Yet Fully Experienced

That is one of Revelation's great:
Tensions.
The victory is:
Real.
Its consequences have not yet been completely:
Realized.
The kingdom has been:
Announced.
Yet rebellion continues.
The Lamb has:
Conquered.
Yet His people still suffer.
The dragon is:
Defeated.
Yet the dragon still rages.

## 7. “But Woe”

Then comes the sudden:
Turn.
But:
Woe.
The celebration in heaven does not mean everything upon earth immediately becomes:
Peaceful.
In fact—
the dragon's defeat creates intensified danger for those now within his:
Reach.
The victory is real.
So is the:
Woe.

## 8. Revelation Does Not Hide the Cost of the Conflict

This is one reason Revelation remains so pastorally:
Honest.
It does not tell suffering Christians:
Everything is fine.
It does not say:
Nothing bad can happen to you.
It does not pretend evil has become:
Harmless.
It says:
Woe.
Christian hope does not require us to deny the reality of:
Suffering.

## 9. “To the Inhabiters of the Earth and of the Sea”

The warning extends broadly:
Earth.
Sea.
Two realms that will become especially important in the next:
Chapter.
Chapter 13 will show beasts arising within this earthly sphere of:
Conflict.
The dragon's fury will find expression through powers operating in the:
World.
Verse 12 prepares us for what is: Coming.

## 10. The Scene Is Moving From Heaven to Earth

The dragon has lost his place in:
Heaven.
So where does the conflict now:
Move?
Earth.
The heavenly battle has ended in the dragon's:
Defeat.
But the earthly consequences of that defeat are about to become:
Severe.
The battlefield has:
Shifted.

## 11. “For the Devil Is Come Down unto You”

Again the direction is:
Down.
Thrown:
Down.
Come:

Down.
The dragon's story keeps moving away from the place of heavenly:
Authority.
The child was taken to the:
Throne.
The dragon comes down to the:
Earth.
One is exalted.
The other is:
Expelled.

## 12. The Devil Comes Down Because He Was Cast Out

This is important.
He does not come to earth as a victorious king expanding his:
Empire.
He comes because he has lost his place in:
Heaven.
His arrival may look frightening from the earthly:
Perspective.
Heaven knows the deeper:
Truth.
He is there because he:
Lost.

## 13. “Having Great Wrath”

His response to defeat is:
Wrath.
Great:
Wrath.
The dragon's anger is not:
Imaginary.
His defeat does not make him:
Passive.
Quite the:
Opposite.
The enemy who has lost his place becomes increasingly:
Furious.

## 14. Great Wrath Does Not Mean Great Authority

We need to keep those ideas:
Separate.
Great:
Wrath.
Limited:
Time.
The dragon's anger may be enormous.

His authority is still:
Bounded.
Intensity should never be confused with:
Sovereignty.
A raging enemy is not necessarily a winning:
Enemy.

## 15. Rage Can Be the Sound of Defeat

That is one of the great ironies of the:
Verse.
From earth, the dragon's rage may look like evidence of his:
Strength.
From heaven, the same rage is evidence of his:
Desperation.
The dragon is furious because something has gone terribly wrong for:
Him.
He has been:
Defeated.

## 16. “Because He Knoweth”

This may be one of the most remarkable phrases in the:
Verse.
The dragon:
Knows.
He knows something about his own:
Situation.
He knows his position has:
Changed.
He knows his future is:
Limited.
He knows the clock is:
Running.

## 17. The Dragon Knows Something God's People Sometimes Forget

His time is:
Short.
God's people may look around and think:
How long?
How long will evil continue?
How long will suffering last?
How long will injustice remain?
How long will the Church have to:
Endure?
The dragon knows:

Not forever.

## 18. “His Time”

Notice the language.
His:
Time.
Not eternity.
Not forever.
Time.
The dragon operates within:
Limits.
His activity has a:
Boundary.
He does not determine those boundaries for:
Himself.
He is a creature living within a story whose ending belongs to:
God.

## 19. “Is Short”

There it:
Is.
Short.
From inside suffering, it may not feel:
Short.
For someone enduring persecution—
it may feel unbearably:
Long.
For someone grieving—
long.
For someone waiting—
long.
For someone praying—
long.
Revelation is not mocking that experience.
It is placing our experience within the larger horizon of:
Eternity.

## 20. Short Does Not Mean Easy

We should not confuse the two.
A short period can still be:
Terrible.
The dragon's wrath is:
Great.
The suffering is:
Real.
The danger is:

Real.
Revelation does not minimize the intensity simply because the duration is:
Limited.
Temporary suffering is still:
Suffering.

## 21. But Temporary Is Not Eternal

And that distinction changes:
Everything.
The dragon's wrath is:
Temporary.
God's kingdom is:
Eternal.
The suffering of God's people is:
Temporary.
Their life with God is:
Eternal.
The conflict has a:
Clock.
The kingdom does:
Not.

## 22. Evil Has an Expiration Date

Perhaps we can say it that:
Simply.
Evil has an expiration:
Date.
The dragon does not.
Sin does not.
Death does not.
Babylon does not.
The beasts do not.
Every enemy that appears enormous within Revelation eventually encounters the same:
Reality.
God remains.
They do:
Not.

## 23. The Dragon Cannot Stop the Clock

That may explain some of his:
Fury.
He can rage.
He can deceive.
He can accuse.
He can persecute.

But he cannot make his time:
Longer.
The future does not belong to:
Him.
Every moment that passes moves creation closer to the fulfillment of God's:
Purpose.

## 24. Do Not Interpret Fury as Victory

This may be one of the most important pastoral lessons in the:
Verse.
When evil becomes louder—
we may assume evil is:
Winning.
When opposition intensifies—
we may assume God is losing:
Ground.
When the dragon rages—
we may assume his kingdom is:
Growing.
Revelation says:
Look again.
His wrath is great precisely because his time is:
Short.

## 25. Heaven's Rejoicing and Earth's Woe Belong to the Same Story

Rejoice.
Woe.
Victory.
Conflict.
Celebration.
Suffering.
All within one:
Verse.
That is not theological:
Confusion.
It is the reality of living between Christ's decisive victory and the final removal of everything that opposes:
Him.
The Church lives in that:
Middle.
And Revelation gives us the ending so we can endure the:
Middle.

## Pastoral Reflection

Sometimes the hardest moment to believe that God is winning is when the enemy seems to be making the most:
Noise.
The problem becomes more:
Intense.
The opposition becomes more:
Aggressive.
The circumstances become more:
Difficult.
And our natural conclusion is:
Things must be getting worse because evil is getting:
Stronger.
Revelation 12:12 asks us to consider another:
Possibility.
Sometimes rage is not the sound of:
Victory.
Sometimes rage is the sound of a defeated enemy running out of:
Time.
That does not mean we minimize the:
Danger.
John certainly does not.
He says:
Woe.
The dragon's wrath is:
Great.
Faithful people may suffer terribly beneath:
It.
But great wrath and short time belong in the same:
Sentence.
The suffering may be real without being:
Permanent.
The darkness may be deep without being:
Final.
The dragon may rage without being:
King.
And sometimes endurance means refusing to interpret the intensity of the present moment as the truth about the final:
Outcome.
The dragon knows his time is:
Short.
Perhaps God's people need to remember what the dragon already:
Knows.

## Something Worth Pondering

There is something almost astonishing about the dragon's:
Knowledge.
He knows his time is:
Short.
The deceiver of the whole world cannot deceive himself about:
That.
He knows he has been:
Defeated.
He knows he has been:
Thrown down.
He knows his opportunity is:
Limited.
And still he:
Rages.
Meanwhile, God's people sometimes look at that rage and begin wondering whether perhaps the dragon is:
Winning.
What if we remembered what he already:
Knows?
His wrath is great.
But his time is:
Short.
The kingdom belongs to:
God.
The authority belongs to:
Christ.
And eternity belongs to the:
Lamb.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When opposition becomes more intense, do I automatically interpret intensity as evidence that evil is winning?
Can I acknowledge the reality of suffering without giving temporary suffering eternal significance?
And when the dragon's wrath seems great, can I remember what even the dragon knows—
his time is short?

# The Dragon’s War Against God’s People

## Revelation 12:13–17

**“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”**
— Revelation 12:13–17, KJV

The dragon knows his time is:
Short.
And now we see what a defeated dragon does with the time he has:
Left.
He:
Pursues.
He:
Floods.
He becomes:
Angry.
He makes:
War.
And finally—
he stands beside the:
Sea.
But there is another pattern running through the passage.
The dragon:
Pursues.
God provides:
Escape.
The dragon sends a:
Flood.
Creation comes to the woman's:
Aid.
The dragon makes:

War.
God's people continue to keep His commandments and hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
The dragon is active.
But once again—
he is not:
Sovereign.

## 1. “And When the Dragon Saw”

The movement begins with the dragon recognizing what has:
Happened.
He has been thrown:
Down.
Verse 12 told us that he knows his time is:
Short.
Verse 13 tells us that he sees the consequences of his:
Defeat.
And his response is not:
Repentance.
It is:
Rage.

## 2. Defeat Does Not Produce Repentance in the Dragon

That is worth:
Noticing.
The dragon experiences defeat.
He loses his place in:
Heaven.
He knows his time is:
Short.
Yet none of this changes his:
Allegiance.
He does not turn toward:
God.
He intensifies his:
Opposition.
Revelation portrays evil as increasingly hardened against the truth it cannot:
Defeat.

## 3. “Cast unto the Earth”

Again John reminds us how the dragon arrived:
Here.
Thrown:
Down.
His earthly activity does not begin from a position of:
Victory.

It begins from:
Defeat.
That interpretive frame must remain around everything that:
Follows.
The dragon may do terrible things upon the earth.
But he does them as one already thrown:
Down.

## 4. “He Persecuted the Woman”

Unable to reach the:
Child—
the dragon turns toward the:
Woman.
The target:
Changes.
The hostility:
Does not.
The woman who gave birth to the Messiah now becomes the object of the dragon's:
Pursuit.
The conflict against Christ becomes conflict against those connected with:
Christ.

## 5. The Dragon Attacks What Belongs to Christ

That pattern will become even clearer in Verse: 17
The dragon cannot dethrone:
Christ.
So he attacks Christ's:
People.
He cannot destroy the:
Lamb.
So he makes war against those who bear the Lamb's:
Testimony.
The Church should not be surprised that allegiance to Christ can bring opposition from powers opposed to:
Christ.

## 6. “To the Woman Were Given”

Then comes one of Revelation's beautiful:
Words.
But.
The dragon:
Pursues.
**But** the woman is:
Given.
The dragon acts.

God:
Provides.
Once again the enemy's action does not become the final sentence in the:
Story.

## 7. “Two Wings of a Great Eagle”

The imagery carries strong biblical:
Echoes.
Israel's deliverance from Egypt naturally comes to:
Mind.
God told Israel that He had carried them on eagles':
Wings.
The picture is one of divine:
Deliverance.
Protection.
Movement away from:
Danger.
John draws from the language of Israel's story to portray God's care for His:
People.

## 8. The Exodus Echo Matters

The woman has already gone into the:
Wilderness.
Now she is given eagle's wings.
Those images belong naturally within the biblical memory of:
Exodus.
A people pursued by an:
Enemy.
Delivered by:
God.
Taken into the:
Wilderness.
Sustained where ordinary survival appears:
Impossible.
The old story helps us understand the new:
Vision.

## 9. Echo Does Not Mean Exact Identification

But we keep our familiar interpretive:
Guardrail.
An echo is not necessarily an exact:
Identification.
John draws from Israel's story.
That does not require us to reduce the woman to only one:
Referent.
Mary remains within the picture.

Israel remains within the picture.
The people of God remain within the:
Picture.
The symbol is large enough to carry the biblical story of God's covenant people toward its fulfillment in:
Christ.

## 10. “That She Might Fly into the Wilderness”

The wings have a:
Purpose.
Escape.
The serpent pursues.
God provides the means of:
Flight.
Again, escape is not portrayed as:
Cowardice.
The woman is not rebuked for leaving the place of:
Danger.
Sometimes God's deliverance looks like strength to:
Stand.
Sometimes God's deliverance looks like a way to:
Leave.

## 11. “Into the Wilderness”

We have been here:
Before.
Verse 6 already told us the woman fled into the:
Wilderness.
Verse 14 returns to the same:
Scene.
John is now expanding the picture he introduced:
Earlier.
The wilderness remains both a place of:
Danger—
and divine:
Provision.

## 12. “To Her Place”

Her:
Place.
That language should sound:
Familiar.
Verse 6 called it a place prepared by:
God.
The wilderness is not random:
Geography.

There is a place within it associated with God's:
Provision.
The woman may be fleeing.
But she is not:
Lost.

## 13. “Where She Is Nourished”

Again:
Nourished.
Not merely:
Hidden.
Not merely:
Protected.
Nourished.
God does not only keep His people away from certain dangers.
He sustains them where He has:
Placed them.
The wilderness is barren.
God's provision is:
Not.

## 14. “A Time and Times and Half a Time”

Now John gives us another expression for the limited period of:
Conflict.
A time.
Times.
Half a:
Time.
The language echoes:
Daniel.
And it corresponds naturally with the limited period we have already encountered in Revelation—
forty-two months.
1,260 days.
The prophetic calculator can remain firmly in the:
Drawer.

## 15. The Point Is Limitation

Whatever additional questions we may ask about the symbolic period, the pastoral truth remains:
Clear.
It is:
Limited.
The dragon does not receive:
Forever.
The wilderness does not last:

Forever.
The persecution does not last:
Forever.
God has placed boundaries around what feels boundaryless from inside the:
Experience.

## 16. “The Serpent Cast Out Water as a Flood”

The dragon now changes:
Tactics.
He cannot reach the woman directly.
So from his mouth comes water like a:
River.
The image is overwhelming.
A flood capable of sweeping the woman:
Away.
The enemy's attack changes form.
His purpose remains:
Destruction.

## 17. The Flood Comes From the Dragon's Mouth

That detail deserves:
Attention.
From his:
Mouth.
Earlier the dragon was identified as the:
Deceiver.
And the:
Accuser.
Now destructive waters pour from his:
Mouth.
We should be cautious about turning every symbolic detail into a rigid:
Code.
But within Revelation, the dragon's mouth is hardly an innocent:
Image.
Words.
Lies.
Accusations.
Deception.
Commands.
Propaganda.
The mouth can become an instrument of destructive:
Power.

## 18. “To Be Carried Away of the Flood”

The dragon's intention is:
Clear.

Sweep her:
Away.
Overwhelm.
Destroy.
Remove.
The image communicates a force that appears impossible to:
Survive.
Once again—
John lets us see the full seriousness of the:
Threat.
Faith does not require pretending the flood is only a:
Puddle.

## 19. “The Earth Helped the Woman”

And there is that word:
Again.
But.
The serpent sends the:
River.
**But** the earth:
Helps.
The dragon acts.
Creation itself becomes part of the woman's:
Deliverance.
The one who seeks to dominate creation discovers that creation ultimately belongs to its:
Creator.

## 20. “The Earth Opened Her Mouth”

The dragon's mouth sends the:
Flood.
The earth opens its:
Mouth.
And swallows the:
River.
There is almost a deliberate symmetry in the:
Image.
The dragon produces the threat.
The created world absorbs:
It.
What looked overwhelming suddenly:
Disappears.

## 21. God Has More Than One Way to Deliver

Earlier the woman received:
Wings.

Now the earth itself:
Helps.
God's provision is not confined to one:
Method.
Sometimes deliverance comes through an obvious:
Miracle.
Sometimes through ordinary:
Means.
Sometimes through people.
Sometimes through circumstances.
Sometimes through an opening we did not know:
Existed.
The Creator is not short of ways to care for His:
People.

## 22. The Dragon Fails Again

We should keep count.
He cannot devour the:
Child.
He loses the battle in:
Heaven.
He cannot prevent the woman's:
Escape.
His flood does not destroy:
Her.
Again.
And again.
And:
Again.
The dragon's rage grows.
His record does not:
Improve.

## 23. “The Dragon Was Wroth”

The frustration becomes:
Anger.
The dragon was already described as having great:
Wrath.
Now his anger focuses more directly upon God's:
People.
But once again—
anger is not the same thing as:
Authority.
The dragon's fury grows precisely because his plans keep:
Failing.

## 24. “Went to Make War”

Unable to destroy the woman—
the dragon changes targets:
Again.
He goes off to make:
War.
The conflict now broadens toward:
Others.
And John finally tells us something that helps us understand who these people:
Are.

## 25. “With the Remnant of Her Seed”

The woman has:
Children.
The imagery expands beyond the male child of Verse: 5
Now there are others connected with the:
Woman.
And John does not leave their identity entirely:
Mysterious.
He describes them by two defining:
Characteristics.

## 26. “Which Keep the Commandments of God”

First:
Obedience.
They keep God's:
Commandments.
In Revelation, faithfulness is not merely saying that we belong to:
God.
Allegiance becomes visible in the way God's people:
Live.
They refuse to surrender obedience simply because obedience becomes:
Costly.

## 27. “Have the Testimony of Jesus Christ”

Second:
Testimony.
There is our word:
Again.
Verse 11 told us that the saints conquered through the word of their:
Testimony.
Verse 17 describes the dragon making war against those who hold the testimony of:
Jesus.

Now we see why testimony is costly.
The dragon opposes those who continue bearing witness to:
Christ.

## 28. Obedience and Testimony Belong Together

John places them side by:
Side.
Keep the commandments of:
God.
Hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
Life and:
Witness.
Obedience and:
Confession.
What they do.
Whom they:
Proclaim.
Faithful endurance involves:
Both.

## 29. The Dragon Makes War Because They Will Not Let Go

Notice John's word:
Hold.
They hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
The dragon pressures them to release:
It.
They:
Hold.
The dragon threatens.
They:
Hold.
The dragon makes war.
They:
Hold.
Sometimes endurance is simply refusing to let go of what we know is:
True.

## 30. This Is the Conflict Revelation Has Been Showing Us All Along

Now Chapter 12 has pulled back the curtain.
Why does faithful witness provoke such:
Opposition?

Why does allegiance to Christ sometimes become:
Costly?
Why does the Church experience pressure to:
Compromise?
Revelation says the visible struggle participates in a larger spiritual:
Conflict.
The dragon opposes the:
Lamb.
Therefore he opposes those who follow the:
Lamb.

## 31. The Dragon's War Continues

And finally—
the dragon's hostility:
Continues.
He has gone to make:
War.
The pursuit of the woman has failed.
The flood has failed.
Now he stands somewhere:
Specific.
At the:
Seashore.
The scene becomes strangely:
Quiet.
But it is the quiet before something new:
Appears.

## 32. Toward the Sand of the Sea

Why the:
Sea?
We should not rush ahead too:
Quickly.
In the KJV, John stands upon the sand as the next chapter begins:
Revelation 13:1.
Because the next thing John will see is a beast rising from the:
Sea.
Chapter 12 ends with the dragon making war.
Chapter 13 begins with the dragon's earthly instruments coming into:
View.

## 33. The Chapter Boundary Is a Hinge

The KJV ends Chapter 12 at Verse: 17
The shoreline scene begins Chapter: 13
The cosmic enemy has been:
Identified.

His defeat has been:
Announced.
His fury has been:
Explained.
His war against God's people has:
Begun.
Now Revelation will show us how that dragon's power operates through beastly forms of earthly:
Power.

## 34. The Dragon Will Work Through Others

That becomes crucial for understanding what comes:
Next.
The dragon does not simply appear everywhere personally.
He works through:
Agents.
Systems.
Authorities.
Deception.
False worship.
Coercive power.
Chapter 13 will make those connections much more:
Visible.
We should let Chapter 13 reveal them in its own:
Time.

## 35. The Final Movement Ends With the Battle Still Continuing

Chapter 12 does not end with the dragon:
Destroyed.
Not yet.
It ends with him preparing for another phase of the:
Conflict.
That might seem like an unsettling way to close the:
Chapter.
Except we already know what the dragon:
Knows.
His time is:
Short.
And we know something else.
The saints conquer through the blood of the:
Lamb.
So when John stands upon the sand of the sea—
we are not supposed to wonder whether he will ultimately:
Win.

We are supposed to watch how faithful people endure while a defeated enemy continues to:
Fight.

## Pastoral Reflection

There is something almost painfully familiar about the dragon in this:
Passage.
When one strategy fails—
he tries:
Another.
The child is beyond his:
Reach.
So he pursues the:
Woman.
The woman escapes.
So he sends a:
Flood.
The flood fails.
So he makes war against her:
Children.
Again.
Again.
Again.
That can feel like life sometimes.
One struggle finally:
Passes.
And another:
Begins.
One prayer is answered.
Another need:
Appears.
One battle seems finished.
Another waits around the:
Corner.
And eventually we may ask:
Will this ever stop?
Revelation's answer is:
Yes.
But perhaps not:
Yet.
That is why faith must:
Endure.
And notice what God does throughout the:
Passage.

A place is:
Prepared.
Wings are:
Given.
The woman is:
Nourished.
The earth:
Helps.
The dragon changes tactics.
God does not cease to:
Provide.
The promise is not that God's people will never experience:
Pursuit.
Flood.
Wilderness.
War.
The promise is that none of those things can remove them from the story God is bringing toward its:
End.
And sometimes endurance looks remarkably simple.
Keep God's:
Commandments.
Hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
When the dragon says:
Let go—
Hold.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon has spent the entire chapter trying to:
Win.
He waited for the:
Child.
Failed.
He fought in:
Heaven.
Failed.
He pursued the:
Woman.
Failed.
He sent a:
Flood.
Failed.
And now he stands on the:

Seashore.
Still angry.
Still dangerous.
Still plotting.
But also:
Defeated.
Perhaps that is the image we should carry with us into Chapter: 13
The dragon's continuing war may look:
Powerful.
But we know something about him before the beast ever:
Appears.
He has already:
Lost.
Revelation gives us that truth before showing us what comes next because we will need it when the beasts begin to:
Rise.
God gives us the ending so we can endure the:
Middle.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When one struggle gives way to another, do I mistake repeated opposition for evidence that God has stopped providing?
Can I recognize God's provision even when He sustains me in the wilderness rather than removing the wilderness?
And when pressure comes to loosen my allegiance to Christ, can I do what Revelation says God's faithful people do—
keep His commandments,
hold the testimony of Jesus,
and refuse to let go?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:13

**“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.”**
— Revelation 12:13, KJV

The dragon has been:
Defeated.
Thrown:
Down.
His time is:
Short.
And now he:
Knows it.
What will he do with that:
Knowledge?
Repent?
Surrender?
Acknowledge the authority of:
God?
No.
He:
Pursues.
The enemy who cannot reach the enthroned Christ turns his fury toward those connected with:
Christ.

## 1. “So”

The verse begins with a:
Connection.
So.
What happens here grows directly from what happened:
Before.
The dragon has been thrown down.
He knows his time is:
Short.
**So** he:
Pursues.
Verse 13 is the consequence of Verse: 12

## 2. The Dragon Acts From Defeat

This is the interpretive frame we must not:
Lose.
The dragon is about to become extremely:

Active.
But his activity does not come from:
Victory.
It comes from:
Defeat.
Everything he does from this point forward should be understood inside that:
Reality.

## 3. “When the Dragon Saw”

The dragon:
Sees.
He recognizes what has:
Happened.
This is not ignorance.
Not confusion.
Not misunderstanding.
He knows he has been:
Thrown down.
The dragon is aware that his position has:
Changed.

## 4. Verse 12 Said He Knows

The previous verse told us:
He knows his time is:
Short.
Now Verse 13 says:
He saw that he had been thrown:
Down.
The dragon understands two realities about his:
Situation.
His place has been:
Lost.
His time is:
Limited.
And still he:
Fights.

## 5. Knowledge Does Not Always Produce Repentance

That is a sobering biblical:
Truth.
Knowing something is true does not necessarily mean we will submit ourselves to that:
Truth.
The dragon knows.
But he does not:
Repent.

He sees.
But he does not:
Surrender.
Knowledge without submission can still produce:
Rebellion.

## 6. The Dragon Becomes More Defiant

The proper response to defeat before God would be:
Surrender.
Instead—
the dragon becomes increasingly:
Defiant.
His opposition continues even when the outcome becomes increasingly:
Clear.
There is something deeply tragic about rebellion that would rather destroy than: Yield.

## 7. "He Was Cast unto the Earth"

John reminds us:
Again.
Thrown:
Down.
We have heard this language repeatedly because John does not want us to:
Forget.
The dragon is not descending voluntarily to expand his:
Kingdom.
He is not arriving as a victorious:
Conqueror.
He is on earth because heaven has expelled:
Him.

## 8. Never Interpret the Dragon Without Remembering His Defeat

This becomes especially important as we approach Chapter: 13
The imagery is about to become even more:
Frightening.
Beasts.
Authority.
Worship.
Coercion.
Deception.
Economic pressure.
But before John shows us any of that, he tells us:
The dragon has been thrown:
Down.

We must carry that truth with us.

## 9. “To the Earth”

The battlefield has:
Shifted.
The dragon has lost his place in:
Heaven.
Now his activity focuses upon the:
Earth.
Verse 12 warned the earth and sea.
Verse 13 begins showing us:
Why.
The cosmic conflict now becomes increasingly visible within earthly:
Experience.

## 10. The Earth Experiences the Rage of a Defeated Enemy

That sounds almost:
Paradoxical.
If he is defeated—
why is he still:
Dangerous?
Because defeated does not yet mean:
Destroyed.
His final removal is still:
Coming.
Until then—
his rage remains:
Real.

## 11. “He Persecuted”

The dragon now:
Pursues.
The word gives us movement.
Determination.
Hostility.
He does not merely watch the:
Woman.
He goes after:
Her.
The enemy who failed to devour the child now directs his attention toward the:
Mother.

## 12. Pursuit Reveals the Dragon's Persistence

Failure does not stop:

Him.
One plan fails.
He tries:
Another.
Another fails.
He changes:
Targets.
That persistence helps explain why Revelation places such emphasis upon the endurance of the:
Saints.
The enemy persists.
Therefore God's people must:
Endure.

## 13. The Dragon Cannot Reach the Child

Verse 5 changed everything.
The child was caught up to God and to His:
Throne.
The dragon cannot follow Him:
There.
Christ is beyond the dragon's:
Reach.
The Messiah's enthronement is:
Secure.
So the dragon redirects his:
Fury.

## 14. The Enemy Attacks What Belongs to the One He Cannot Defeat

This becomes a major theme of the:
Passage.
The dragon cannot overthrow:
Christ.
So he attacks those who belong to:
Christ.
He cannot destroy the:
Messiah.
So he pursues the people through whom God's purposes are being:
Worked.
His hostility toward God's people grows from his hostility toward:
God.

## 15. “The Woman”

And once again we encounter this mysterious, magnificent:
Figure.

The woman clothed with the:
Sun.
The moon beneath her:
Feet.
A crown of twelve stars upon her:
Head.
She gave birth to the:
Child.
She fled into the:
Wilderness.
Now she is:
Pursued.

## 16. We Should Preserve the Fullness of the Symbol

As we have said from the:
Beginning—
we should resist reducing the woman too:
Quickly.
Mary belongs within the:
Image.
Israel belongs within the:
Image.
The covenant people of God belong within the:
Image.
The symbol gathers together the story of the people through whom the Messiah comes and among whom God's redemptive purposes continue to:
Unfold.
We should allow the image to remain as large as John makes:
It.

## 17. “Which Brought Forth”

John identifies the woman through what has already:
Happened.
She gave:
Birth.
The promise came through:
Her.
The Messiah entered the story.
The dragon tried to stop:
It.
And failed.
Her identity remains tied to the fulfillment of God's:
Promise.

## 18. “The Man Child”

The child is no longer physically present in the:

Scene.
He has been taken to God and His:
Throne.
Yet His relationship to the woman continues to shape the dragon's:
Actions.
The dragon pursues her because of the Child she:
Bore.
The conflict surrounding God's people cannot be separated from the:
Messiah.

## 19. The Woman Is Pursued Because of Her Connection to Christ

That becomes pastorally important.
The woman's danger is not evidence that she has wandered outside God's:
Purpose.
In fact—
the opposite is:
True.
She is pursued precisely because she stands within the story of God's:
Purpose.
Difficulty is not always evidence that we are in the wrong:
Place.

## 20. Faithfulness Can Attract Opposition

We should be careful not to turn every hardship into evidence of spiritual:
Attack.
Sometimes pipes break because pipes:
Break.
Sometimes bodies become ill because bodies are:
Mortal.
Sometimes people disagree because people:
Disagree.
But Revelation does teach us that genuine allegiance to Christ can bring genuine:
Opposition.
Faithfulness does not guarantee a conflict-free:
Life.

## 21. Persecution Is Not Proof That God Has Lost Control

Imagine the scene from the woman's:
Perspective.
The dragon is:
Coming.
She is being:
Pursued.

It might appear that the dragon has regained the:
Advantage.
But the reader knows something the image itself might make easy to:
Forget.
The dragon is pursuing her because he has already:
Lost.

## 22. Never Let the Pursuit Rewrite What Came Before

This is one of those places where we must remember the whole:
Story.
The child has been:
Enthroned.
The dragon has been:
Defeated.
The accuser has been:
Thrown down.
The saints have:
Conquered.
The dragon's time is:
Short.
Then comes the:
Pursuit.
Do not allow the newest trouble to erase everything God has already:
Done.

## 23. The Dragon Is Behind the Woman

That simple spatial picture may preach all by:
Itself.
The dragon:
Pursues.
That means the woman is moving:
Forward.
The dragon is behind:
Her.
She has not surrendered.
She has not turned back toward:
Him.
She continues toward the place God has:
Prepared.
Sometimes endurance looks like continuing forward while something frightening is still behind:
You.

## 24. Verse 13 Does Not End the Story

If we stopped here—
the scene would look:

Terrible.
A woman.
A dragon.
A pursuit.
And no obvious means of:
Escape.
But we have learned by now not to stop reading while the dragon is still:
Moving.
Verse 14 begins with one of Revelation's most important:
Words.
**But.**
The dragon pursues.
**But** the woman is: Given.

## 25. The Pursuer Is Not the One Writing the Story

The dragon can:
Pursue.
He can threaten.
He can rage.
He can change tactics.
But he cannot determine the final:
Outcome.
The woman belongs inside a story that began before the dragon appeared and will continue after the dragon is:
Gone.
He is part of the conflict.
He is not the author of the:
Story.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are times when life feels like one long:
Pursuit.
You finish one battle—
and another seems to find:
You.
You survive one difficult season—
and another begins.
You finally think:
Perhaps things will settle down now.
And then you hear footsteps behind:
You.
That can become:
Exhausting.
And in those moments it is easy to interpret the newest struggle as though everything God has already done has somehow been:

Cancelled.
Revelation 12:13 tells us not to make that:
Mistake.
The dragon is pursuing the woman.
Yes.
But he is pursuing her after being thrown:
Down.
After the child has reached the:
Throne.
After heaven has announced:
Salvation.
Power.
Kingdom.
Authority.
After God's people have been called:
Conquerors.
The pursuit is:
Real.
But it does not erase what came:
Before.
Sometimes the newest trouble becomes so large in our vision that we forget the faithfulness of God that brought us this:
Far.
So when the dragon begins pursuing again—
remember the:
Throne.
Remember the:
Lamb.
Remember the:
Victory.
And then keep moving toward the place God has:
Prepared.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon knows he has:
Lost.
And still he:
Pursues.
The woman knows she is being:
Pursued.
And still she moves:
Forward.
That may be the contrast worth carrying from this:
Verse.

The enemy persists in:
Opposition.
God's people persist in:
Faithfulness.
And the deciding factor will not be which one can persist the:
Longest.
Because the dragon's time is:
Short.
God's kingdom is:
Forever.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Have I allowed a new struggle to make me forget what God has already done?
Do I sometimes interpret opposition as evidence that I must have stepped outside God's purposes?
And when something seems to be pursuing me from behind, can I keep moving forward in faith—
remembering that the pursuer does not write the ending?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:14

**“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”**
— Revelation 12:14, KJV

The dragon:
Pursues.
**But**—
the woman is:
Given.
There is that word:
Again.
The dragon acts.
God:
Provides.
And what God provides is enough to carry the woman from the place of:
Pursuit—
to the place of:
Provision.
Not out of the wilderness.
Into:
It.
Because sometimes God's deliverance is not the removal of the wilderness.
Sometimes God's deliverance is discovering that He has already prepared a place for us:
There.

## 1. “But”

Verse 13 ended with:
Pursuit.
Verse 14 begins with:
But.
That single word changes the direction of the:
Scene.
The dragon pursues.
**But** the woman is:
Given.
Once again—
the enemy acts.
But the enemy does not get the final:
Word.

## 2. The Dragon's Action Is Met by God's Provision

Notice the contrast.
The dragon:
Pursues.
The woman is:
Given.
The dragon brings:
Threat.
God provides what is:
Needed.
The text does not say the pursuit was:
Imaginary.
It tells us the pursuit was not:
Ultimate.

## 3. “To the Woman Were Given”

That phrase matters.
She does not manufacture her own:
Deliverance.
She does not suddenly discover that she was stronger than the:
Dragon.
Something is:
Given.
The language points toward:
Provision.
She receives what she needs for the journey before:
Her.

## 4. God Provides What the Next Step Requires

The woman needs to:
Escape.
So she is given:
Wings.
Not a sword.
Not armor.
Not a larger:
Dragon.
Wings.
God's provision corresponds to what she actually:
Needs.
Sometimes we ask God for the strength to defeat something when what He provides is a way to move beyond:
It.

## 5. “The Two Wings”

John becomes surprisingly:
Specific.
Two:
Wings.
The imagery is not of the woman fighting the:
Serpent.
It is of the woman being carried beyond his immediate:
Reach.
Deliverance sometimes looks less like standing your ground and more like being enabled to:
Move.

## 6. “Of a Great Eagle”

The eagle carries deep biblical:
Memory.
For readers shaped by Israel's Scriptures, the image naturally recalls God's deliverance of Israel from:
Egypt.
God reminded Israel:
“I bare you on eagles' wings.”
The picture is not primarily about the strength of:
Israel.
It is about the strength of the God who:
Carried them.

## 7. The Exodus Echo Is Difficult to Miss

Think about the pattern.
An oppressive:
Enemy.
A threatened:
People.
Divine:
Deliverance.
A journey into the:
Wilderness.
Supernatural:
Provision.
That sounds very much like:
Exodus.
John is drawing from the great biblical story of God's deliverance of His:
People.

## 8. God Has Carried His People Before

That matters pastorally.

The wilderness of Revelation 12 is not the first wilderness God has:
Seen.
The pursuing dragon is not the first enemy God's people have:
Faced.
God has carried people through impossible places:
Before.
Israel had a:
Pharaoh.
The woman has a:
Dragon.
God remains:
God.

## 9. The Eagle's Wings Speak of God's Strength

The woman does not suddenly grow powerful enough to overpower the:
Dragon.
She is carried by provision greater than her own:
Strength.
That distinction matters.
Faith does not always mean discovering how strong we:
Are.
Sometimes faith means discovering how faithfully God can carry us when our own strength is:
Gone.

## 10. “That She Might Fly”

The wings have a:
Purpose.
Movement.
Escape.
Distance from the:
Serpent.
God's provision enables the woman to do what the situation:
Requires.
She:
Flies.
Grace does not always leave us standing where we:
Were.
Sometimes grace gives us permission and ability to:
Move.

## 11. Leaving Can Be an Act of Faith

There is sometimes a mistaken idea that courage always means:
Staying.
Not necessarily.
David fled from:

Saul.
Elijah fled into the:
Wilderness.
Joseph was taken away from Herod's:
Threat.
Jesus sometimes withdrew from those seeking to harm:
Him.
There are times when leaving danger is not cowardice.
It is:
Wisdom.
And sometimes it is precisely where God's provision is:
Leading.

## 12. “From the Face of the Serpent”

John now uses:
Serpent.
Not:
Dragon.
The identity remains the:
Same.
But the word takes us back again toward:
Eden.
The ancient serpent continues his ancient:
Opposition.
The story that began in Genesis continues toward its conclusion in:
Revelation.

## 13. The Serpent Is Still Pursuing the Promise

From the beginning, Scripture tells the story of conflict surrounding God's redemptive:
Promise.
The serpent opposes.
God:
Promises.
The serpent attacks.
God:
Preserves.
The serpent seeks to destroy.
God continues moving His purposes:
Forward.
Revelation gathers that ancient conflict into one enormous:
Vision.

## 14. “Into the Wilderness”

And here is the surprise.
Where does God enable her to:

Go?
Not immediately into a:
Palace.
Not into a garden.
Not into a comfortable:
Home.
Into the:
Wilderness.
Deliverance and wilderness can exist in the same:
Sentence.

## 15. The Wilderness Is Not the Opposite of God's Care

We often assume that if God is providing, the landscape should become:
Pleasant.
But Scripture repeatedly challenges that:
Assumption.
Israel was delivered from Egypt—
into the:
Wilderness.
Elijah was sustained—
in the:
Wilderness.
Jesus was tested—
in the:
Wilderness.
The wilderness may be difficult.
But difficult does not mean:
Godless.

## 16. The Wilderness Can Become a Place of Protection

The place that looks barren may actually become a place of:
Refuge.
That is one of the paradoxes of this:
Verse.
The dragon represents obvious:
Danger.
The wilderness looks like another kind of:
Danger.
Yet the wilderness becomes the place where the woman is:
Preserved.
What looks inhospitable may sometimes be where God keeps us: Safe.

## 17. “To Her Place”

That phrase should stop us for a:
Moment.
Her:

Place.
Not simply:
A place.
Verse 6 told us it was a place prepared by:
God.
Now John calls it:
Her place.
The wilderness contains somewhere already associated with God's intention for:
Her.

## 18. God Was There Before the Woman Arrived

We said this in Verse 6, and Verse 14 makes it worth hearing:
Again.
The woman does not arrive in the wilderness and surprise:
God.
God does not suddenly begin searching for somewhere to put:
Her.
The place is already:
There.
God was in the wilderness before she:
Arrived.

## 19. "Where She Is Nourished"

Again John uses the language of:
Nourishment.
God does not merely help the woman:
Escape.
He sustains her after the:
Escape.
Deliverance is not only about getting us out of one:
Place.
It is also about sustaining us in the place where God leads us:
Next.

## 20. Nourishment Does Not Mean Luxury

The text says:
Nourished.
It does not say:
Pampered.
The wilderness remains:
Wilderness.
There may still be scarcity.
Uncertainty.
Difficulty.
Dependence.

But there is:
Enough.
Sometimes God's provision is not abundance beyond imagination.
Sometimes it is daily bread sufficient for the:
Journey.

## 21. Wilderness Provision Teaches Dependence

Israel learned this through:
Manna.
Enough for the:
Day.
Then trust God for:
Tomorrow.
The wilderness strips away some of the illusions of:
Self-sufficiency.
It teaches God's people to receive what they need from the One who:
Provides.
That can be uncomfortable.
It can also become deeply:
Formative.

## 22. “For a Time and Times and Half a Time”

Now John gives us another description of the period during which the woman is:
Nourished.
A time.
Times.
Half a:
Time.
The language carries echoes from the book of:
Daniel.
And it belongs with the other limited periods we have already encountered in:
Revelation.

## 23. The Calculator Stays in the Drawer

This is precisely where prophetic calculators begin coming back:
Out.
We will leave ours firmly in the:
Drawer.
John's pastoral point does not depend upon our constructing a modern:
Calendar.
The period is:
Measured.
The period is:
Limited.

The wilderness does not last:
Forever.
That is enough for us to hear before we begin claiming more than the text:
Says.

## 24. God Knows How Long the Wilderness Lasts

The woman may not know when the season will:
End.
God:
Does.
The dragon's time is:
Short.
The woman's wilderness is:
Measured.
Neither persecution nor wilderness possesses unlimited:
Duration.
There is a boundary known to:
God.
And sometimes faith must live inside that boundary without knowing exactly where it:
Is.

## 25. God Does Not Always Remove the Wilderness—Sometimes He Nourishes Us There

Perhaps that is the heart of Verse: 14
We often pray:
Lord, get me out of:
Here.
And sometimes God:
Does.
The sea opens.
The door opens.
The circumstances:
Change.
But sometimes God's answer is:
I have prepared a place for you here.
And I will nourish you until this season is:
Finished.
Sometimes faith endures until God changes the:
Circumstances.
Sometimes faith endures through circumstances that do not:
Change.
And sometimes faith endures all the way:
Home.
In every case—

the wilderness is never beyond the reach of God's:
Provision.

## Pastoral Reflection

Most of us would write the story differently.
If God gives the woman wings—
we would expect her to fly directly out of the:
Wilderness.
Instead—
the wings carry her:
Into it.
That seems almost:
Backward.
Until we remember what Scripture has taught us about the:
Wilderness.
The wilderness is where Israel learned that bread can come from:
Heaven.
The wilderness is where Elijah discovered that God could sustain him when his strength was:
Gone.
The wilderness is where God's people repeatedly discovered that barren places are not beyond God's:
Reach.
And perhaps that is something some of us need to:
Hear.
We sometimes measure God's presence by how comfortable the landscape:
Looks.
Green pasture?
God must be:
Here.
Wilderness?
Something must have gone:
Wrong.
Revelation says:
Not necessarily.
Sometimes the wilderness contains a place already prepared by:
God.
Sometimes the place we would never have chosen becomes the place where we discover provision we would never otherwise have:
Known.
And sometimes God's greatest gift is not removing us immediately from a difficult season.
It is giving us wings to reach the place where He will nourish us while that season:

Lasts.
The wilderness may still be:
Wilderness.
But if God has prepared a place there—
you are not:
Abandoned.

## Something Worth Pondering

The woman receives:
Wings.
We might expect wings to carry her somewhere:
Beautiful.
Instead they carry her into the:
Wilderness.
And yet—
that is exactly where God's provision is:
Waiting.
Perhaps we sometimes misunderstand deliverance because we assume God's rescue must always take us somewhere:
Comfortable.
But Scripture repeatedly shows us something:
Different.
God's presence can turn an unlikely place into a place of:
Provision.
The important question may not always be:
How quickly can I get out of this wilderness?
Sometimes the question is:
Where has God prepared my place within:
It?
Because God was in the wilderness before you arrived.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Have I interpreted a wilderness season as evidence that God has abandoned me?
Can I recognize provision even when it looks more like daily nourishment than immediate deliverance?
And if God does not remove the wilderness today, can I trust that He already knows where my place is—
and how long I will need to be nourished there?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:15

**“And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.”**
— Revelation 12:15, KJV

The woman has been given:
Wings.
She has reached the:
Wilderness.
God is:
Nourishing her.
The serpent cannot reach her as he:
Intended.
So he changes:
Tactics.
And this time—
the attack comes from his:
Mouth.
A river.
A flood.
Something designed to overwhelm the woman and sweep her:
Away.
The serpent may change his method.
He has not changed his:
Purpose.

## 1. “Then”

The attack:
Continues.
Verse 14 did not end the:
Conflict.
The woman has escaped.
She is being nourished.
She is within the place associated with God's:
Provision.
**Then** the serpent acts:
Again.
Provision does not necessarily mean the absence of further:
Opposition.

## 2. The Serpent Changes Tactics

The dragon pursued the:
Woman.

That failed.
Now the serpent sends something after:
Her.
The method changes.
The objective remains the:
Same.
Destroy what belongs within God's redemptive:
Purpose.
Evil can be:
Adaptive.

## 3. Failure Does Not Stop the Serpent

We have seen this repeatedly.
He cannot devour the:
Child.
He fights in heaven and is:
Defeated.
He pursues the woman and she is given:
Wings.
Now he tries:
Again.
The persistence of evil is one reason Revelation speaks so often about the endurance of the:
Saints.

## 4. “From His Mouth”

John tells us where the river:
Originates.
The serpent's:
Mouth.
That detail should make us:
Listen.
The serpent has already been described as the deceiver of the whole:
World.
The dragon has been described as the:
Accuser.
Both deception and accusation operate through what is:
Communicated.
Now destruction pours from the serpent's:
Mouth.

## 5. The Serpent Has Used His Mouth Before

The biblical story of the serpent begins with:
Words.
“Yea, hath God said...?”
The serpent's first appearance in Scripture is associated not with claws or:

Fire—
but with:
Deception.
A question.
A distortion.
A lie.
The ancient serpent has always understood the destructive potential of false:
Words.

## 6. But We Should Not Force the Symbol

We need our familiar interpretive guardrail:
Here.
John does not explicitly say:
The river represents false teaching.
Or propaganda.
Or accusation.
Or persecution.
Or any one specific historical:
Event.
Those possibilities may help us hear dimensions of the:
Image.
But the text itself gives us the broader picture:
A destructive flood proceeds from the serpent and threatens to overwhelm the:
Woman.
Where Scripture leaves room—
we will leave room:
Too.

## 7. “The Serpent Cast Out”

This is deliberate:
Action.
The serpent pours out the:
Water.
The flood is not an accidental:
Disaster.
Within the vision, it is directed:
Hostility.
The serpent intends something very:
Specific.
The woman must be:
Swept away.

## 8. “Water as a Flood”

John says:
Like.

That little word reminds us that we are dealing with visionary:
Imagery.
Water like a:
River.
The picture is of something:
Powerful.
Fast-moving.
Overwhelming.
Difficult to:
Escape.
The threat comes with enormous:
Force.

## 9. Water Can Carry Different Meanings in Scripture

Water is not automatically a symbol of one particular:
Thing.
Throughout Scripture, water can represent:
Life.
Cleansing.
Chaos.
Judgment.
Danger.
Deliverance.
So we should resist saying:
Water always means this.
Context must guide:
Us.
Here the meaning is unmistakably:
Threatening.

## 10. This Water Is Intended to Destroy

The purpose is stated explicitly.
To sweep the woman:
Away.
Whatever else the flood may suggest—
its purpose within the vision is:
Destruction.
The serpent wants the woman:
Gone.
Not inconvenienced.
Not frightened.
Destroyed.

## 11. The Attack Is Designed to Overwhelm

That is what floods:
Do.

They exceed ordinary means of:
Resistance.
A person may stand against rain.
A person cannot simply stand against a raging:
River.
The imagery communicates an attack that appears greater than the woman's ability to:
Withstand.
She cannot defeat this by simply trying:
Harder.

## 12. Some Attacks Feel Exactly Like That

There are seasons when difficulty arrives one problem at a:
Time.
And then there are seasons when it feels as though everything comes at:
Once.
Not a drop.
A:
Flood.
One problem joins another.
And another.
Until we wonder how much more we can:
Carry.
Revelation does not pretend God's people never experience moments that feel:
Overwhelming.

## 13. The Flood Comes After the Wilderness Provision

This is important.
The woman is already where God has:
Provided.
She is already being:
Nourished.
And still the flood:
Comes.
Therefore the presence of opposition does not prove the absence of God's:
Provision.
You can be exactly where God has sustained you—
and still experience:
Trouble.

## 14. Being in God's Care Does Not Mean Being Beyond Attack

We sometimes expect God's protection to mean:
Nothing difficult can reach me.

Revelation offers a more mature picture.
The serpent attacks.
The woman is:
Threatened.
The flood comes.
Yet God's preservation remains:
Active.
Protection does not always mean preventing the attack from being:
Launched.
Sometimes it means preventing the attack from accomplishing its intended:
Purpose.

## 15. The Serpent Wants to Separate the Woman From Her Place

Verse 14 told us she had:
Her place.
A place where she was being:
Nourished.
Now the serpent sends something designed to sweep her:
Away.
That contrast matters.
God provides a place.
The serpent tries to remove her from:
It.
The enemy seeks to disrupt what God is:
Sustaining.

## 16. "After the Woman"

The attack has a:
Target.
After the:
Woman.
The serpent's hostility is not random within the:
Vision.
She stands within the story of God's:
Promise.
She gave birth to the:
Child.
She represents the people bound to God's redemptive:
Purpose.
And therefore she becomes the object of the serpent's:
Hostility.

## 17. Evil Often Attacks What It Cannot Possess

The serpent cannot claim the:

Child.
He cannot occupy the:
Throne.
He cannot remain in:
Heaven.
He cannot own the woman who belongs within God's:
Purpose.
So he attempts to:
Destroy.
There is a terrible frustration within evil.
It cannot become God.
So it attacks what belongs to:
God.

## 18. “To Be Carried Away of the Flood”

The phrase communicates:
Removal.
The serpent wants the woman carried away from the place where she is being:
Sustained.
The attack is intended to make her lose her:
Footing.
Lose her:
Place.
Lose her:
Security.
Lose her ability to:
Remain.
The serpent wants the flood to determine where she:
Goes.

## 19. Sometimes the Goal of Opposition Is Simply to Move Us

Not every attack needs to destroy faith immediately.
Sometimes it only needs to move us a little:
First.
Move us away from:
Trust.
Move us away from:
Obedience.
Move us away from:
Testimony.
Move us away from the place where God is:
Nourishing us.
A flood does not ask where you want to:

Go.
It carries you where the current:
Leads.

## 20. Endurance Sometimes Means Refusing to Be Swept Away

We often picture endurance as:
Advancing.
Sometimes endurance is simply:
Remaining.
Still trusting.
Still praying.
Still obeying.
Still bearing:
Witness.
Still holding the testimony of:
Jesus.
The flood says:
Move.
Faith says:
Here I stand.

## 21. “With the Flood”

John finally names the image:
Flood.
Flood imagery carries deep biblical associations with overwhelming:
Judgment.
Chaos.
Enemies.
Destruction.
The Psalms sometimes describe threatening enemies and distress in the language of overwhelming:
Waters.
John's image belongs comfortably within that biblical world.

## 22. The Flood Looks Larger Than the Woman

Visually, the imbalance is:
Striking.
A woman.
A:
Flood.
Humanly speaking—
we know which one should:
Win.

But Revelation has repeatedly warned us against judging reality only by what appears strongest in the:
Picture.
A Lamb conquered a:
Dragon.
Appearances are not the final measure of:
Power.

## 23. The Serpent Can Send the Flood—He Cannot Guarantee the Result

This distinction is:
Crucial.
The serpent controls the:
Attack.
He does not control the:
Outcome.
He can pour out the:
River.
He can intend to sweep the woman:
Away.
But intention is not:
Achievement.
We learned that when the dragon waited to devour the:
Child.
We are about to learn it:
Again.

## 24. Do Not Stop Reading While the Flood Is Still Coming

Verse 15 ends at the worst possible:
Moment.
The flood is rushing toward the:
Woman.
If we stopped here—
destruction might seem:
Inevitable.
But Revelation has taught us better than to stop reading while the enemy's plan is still in:
Motion.
Verse 16 begins:
**But.**
The serpent sends the flood.
**But** the earth comes to the woman's:
Help.

## 25. The Flood Is Real—But It Is Not the Ending

This may be the pastoral heart of the:
Verse.
The flood is:
Real.
The danger is:
Real.
The serpent's intention is:
Real.
Faith does not require us to call the flood something less than what it:
Is.
But neither should we call the flood the:
Ending.
The serpent has not written the next:
Verse.
God has.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are times when life does not feel like:
Rain.
It feels like a:
Flood.
One thing happens.
Then another.
Then another.
And eventually we stop asking:
How do I solve this?
And begin asking:
How do I keep from being swept:
Away?
Revelation does not shame us for feeling:
Overwhelmed.
The woman is facing something designed precisely to:
Overwhelm her.
The flood is larger than:
She is.
And perhaps that is part of the:
Point.
Her survival will not depend upon pretending she is stronger than the:
Flood.
It will depend upon a provision beyond:
Herself.
That was true when she needed:
Wings.

It will be true when the earth opens its:
Mouth.
And it is often true for:
Us.
There are moments when faith is not saying:
I can handle this.
Faith is saying:
I cannot handle this by myself—
but I am not by:
Myself.
The flood may be:
Real.
The current may be:
Strong.
The threat may be:
Frightening.
But the serpent does not control what happens:
Next.
So when life feels like a flood—
do not confuse being overwhelmed with being:
Abandoned.
And never stop reading while the flood is still:
Coming.

## Something Worth Pondering

The serpent sends the flood from his:
Mouth.
God does not prevent him from pouring it:
Out.
But in the next verse—
the flood will not accomplish what the serpent:
Intended.
There is an enormous difference between what evil:
Attempts—
and what evil is finally permitted to:
Accomplish.
We often see the attempt and immediately imagine the:
Outcome.
The threat appears—
and fear writes the next:
Verse.
But fear is a terrible:
Author.
The serpent may send the flood.

He does not get to write the:
Ending.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Is there something in my life right now that feels less like a problem and more like a flood?
Have I mistaken the size of the threat for proof that the threat will accomplish everything I fear?
And when I cannot yet see how God will provide, can I resist writing the next verse myself—
and trust Him enough to keep reading?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:16

**“And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.”**
— Revelation 12:16, KJV

The river is:
Coming.
The woman appears:
Overmatched.
The dragon intends to sweep her:
Away.
And then—
**But.**
The earth comes to her:
Help.
The dragon opens his:
Mouth.
The earth opens its:
Mouth.
The dragon sends the:
River.
The earth swallows it:
Whole.
What looked unstoppable suddenly:
Disappears.
The dragon had a plan.
God had already made a:
World.

## 1. “But”

There it is:
Again.
One of the most important words in this entire:
Chapter.
The dragon waits to devour the:
Child.
**But** the child reaches the:
Throne.
The dragon fights in:
Heaven.
**But** he is:
Defeated.

The dragon pursues the:
Woman.
**But** she is given:
Wings.
The serpent sends the:
Flood.
**But**—
the earth comes to her:
Help.

## 2. The Story Changes With a Single Word

At the end of Verse 15, everything looked:
Hopeless.
A woman.
A wilderness.
An approaching:
Flood.
We could easily imagine what happens:
Next.
Except John begins the next verse with:
But.
The apparent outcome was not the actual:
Outcome.
That is becoming one of Chapter 12's great:
Patterns.

## 3. “The Earth”

This time the instrument of deliverance is:
Unexpected.
The:
Earth.
Not Michael.
Not an angel.
Not another heavenly:
Army.
The earth itself becomes part of the woman's:
Deliverance.
Creation comes to her:
Aid.

## 4. The Creator Can Use His Creation

That should not surprise:
Us.
The earth belongs to:
God.
The sea belongs to:

God.
The heavens belong to:
God.
Everything the dragon attempts occurs within a creation he did not:
Make.
The dragon may manipulate.
Distort.
Destroy.
But he is never:
Creator.

## 5. The Dragon Is Fighting on Someone Else's Ground

There is something almost ironic about the:
Scene.
The dragon has been thrown down to the:
Earth.
Then he attempts to use his power against the:
Woman.
But the earth itself comes to her:
Aid.
The dragon is fighting within a creation that ultimately answers to someone:
Else.

## 6. “Helped the Woman”

The language is wonderfully:
Simple.
Help.
The woman needs:
Help.
And help:
Comes.
Revelation does not tell us she saves:
Herself.
It tells us that something outside herself comes to her:
Aid.
There is no shame in needing:
Help.

## 7. The Woman Has Needed Help Throughout the Chapter

Think about her:
Story.
She gives birth under:
Threat.
The child is caught up to:

God.
She flees into the:
Wilderness.
A place is prepared for:
Her.
She is:
Nourished.
She receives eagle's:
Wings.
Now the earth comes to her:
Help.
Her story is not one of heroic self-sufficiency.
It is a story of sustained:
Provision.

## 8. Dependence Is Not Defeat

Our culture often celebrates:
Independence.
I can handle:
It.
I do not need:
Anyone.
I will figure it:
Out.
Revelation gives us another picture.
The woman survives because she is:
Helped.
God's people are not called to prove that they need:
Nothing.
We are called to trust the God who:
Provides.

## 9. The Help Comes From an Unexpected Direction

Verse 14 gave her:
Wings.
We might expect another intervention from:
Above.
Instead—
help comes from:
Below.
The earth beneath her feet becomes the means of:
Deliverance.
God's provision does not always come from the direction we are:
Watching.

## 10. We Should Be Careful About Limiting How God Can Help

We sometimes decide in advance what an answered prayer must look:
Like.
God must change this:
Person.
Open this:
Door.
Remove this:
Problem.
Provide this specific:
Solution.
And sometimes He does.
But Verse 16 reminds us that God's resources are larger than our:
Expectations.
The woman needed help.
God had an:
Earth.

## 11. "The Earth Opened Her Mouth"

Now John gives us striking:
Imagery.
The earth opens its:
Mouth.
Only one verse earlier—
the serpent opened:
His.
The parallel is difficult to:
Miss.
Mouth against:
Mouth.
The dragon's mouth produces the:
Threat.
The earth's mouth removes:
It.

## 12. The Dragon's Mouth Produces Destruction

From the dragon's mouth came the:
River.
Something intended to overwhelm.
Sweep away.
Destroy.
The dragon's mouth has become the source of:
Chaos.

This fits what we already know about:
Him.
Deceiver.
Accuser.
The enemy whose words distort truth now pours destruction from his:
Mouth.

## 13. The Earth's Mouth Swallows the Threat

The earth does not argue with the:
River.
It simply:
Swallows it.
What appeared enormous in Verse 15 becomes manageable in Verse: 16
The flood looked unstoppable.
Then the earth opened its:
Mouth.
Sometimes the thing that seems overwhelming to us is not overwhelming to:
God.

## 14. “Swallowed Up the Flood”

Not redirected.
Not slowed.
Not reduced.
Swallowed.
The threat disappears into the:
Earth.
The serpent intended the river to consume the:
Woman.
Instead—
the earth consumes the:
River.
The intended destruction is:
Reversed.

## 15. The Thing Sent to Swallow Her Is Itself Swallowed

There is a beautiful reversal in the:
Image.
The river was supposed to sweep the woman:
Away.
Instead the river itself is:
Removed.
The destroyer discovers that destruction does not always travel in the direction he:
Intended.
Revelation is filled with these divine:
Reversals.

## 16. The Exodus Echo May Still Be Nearby

The imagery again invites memories of Israel's:
Deliverance.
A pursuing enemy.
God's people escaping.
Waters associated with danger.
And God's intervention preventing the enemy from accomplishing its:
Purpose.
We should not force every detail into a one-to-one:
Correspondence.
But the larger Exodus pattern remains difficult to:
Miss.
God knows how to preserve a pursued:
People.

## 17. Scripture Also Knows the Image of the Earth Swallowing

Israel's Scriptures contain scenes in which the earth opens and:
Swallows.
Those passages may contribute to the imaginative world behind John's:
Vision.
But again—
we should resist forcing Revelation 12:16 into a precise replay of one Old Testament:
Event.
John's immediate point is clear enough.
The dragon's flood:
Fails.

## 18. We Do Not Need to Decode the Earth

This is another place where speculation can outrun the:
Text.
What exactly does the earth:
Represent?
A particular nation?
Political development?
Geographical location?
Historical event?
John does not tell us:
Here.
So we should not pretend that he:
Did.
The earth functions in the vision as the means through which the woman's threatened destruction is:

Prevented.
That is enough to hear the theological:
Point.

## 19. God Can Use Ordinary Means for Extraordinary Preservation

The earth is not introduced as some new supernatural:
Character.
It is simply:
Creation.
That is pastorally significant.
Not every act of providence arrives with:
Thunder.
Angels.
Visions.
Miracles visible to everyone.
Sometimes God's provision comes through circumstances so ordinary that we recognize His care only in:
Hindsight.

## 20. The Flood Was Real Even Though It Failed

We should not minimize Verse: 15
The threat was:
Real.
The serpent's intention was:
Real.
The danger was:
Real.
But real danger does not mean inevitable:
Destruction.
The river existed.
It simply did not accomplish what the dragon intended:
It to do.

## 21. Intention Is Not Outcome

We have encountered this lesson:
Before.
The dragon intended to devour the:
Child.
He failed.
He intended to prevail in:
Heaven.
He failed.
He intended to sweep away the:
Woman.

He fails:
Again.
Evil's intention should be taken seriously.
But evil's intention should never be mistaken for evil's:
Authority.

## 22. The Dragon Can Pour—But He Cannot Command Creation

He pours the:
River.
But he cannot order the earth:
Stay closed.
He launches the:
Attack.
But he cannot guarantee its:
Success.
The dragon has power.
He does not have:
Sovereignty.
That distinction runs through the entire:
Chapter.

## 23. Yesterday's Flood Can Become Today's Testimony

Imagine standing with the woman after the river has:
Disappeared.
The thing that moments earlier looked certain to destroy her is now:
Gone.
She can look back toward the place where the flood was swallowed and:
Remember.
I thought that would carry me:
Away.
It did:
Not.
God provided:
Help.
Sometimes we do not recognize a deliverance until we are standing on the other side of:
It.

## 24. The Dragon Fails Again

By now the pattern is almost:
Relentless.
The child:
Safe.
The heavenly battle:

Lost.
The woman:
Escapes.
The flood:
Swallowed.
Every strategy changes.
Every strategy:
Fails.
And this repeated failure explains what happens in Verse: 17
The dragon becomes:
Angry.
Very:
Angry.

## 25. God Already Has an Answer the Dragon Has Not Considered

Perhaps that is the heart of Verse: 16
The dragon sees the woman.
He sees the wilderness.
He sees the river.
He believes he knows how the story will:
End.
What he does not account for is the:
Earth.
God's answer is already present in the scene before the dragon launches the:
Attack.
The means of deliverance is beneath the woman's feet before she even knows she will:
Need it.
The dragon has a:
River.
God has an:
Earth.

## Pastoral Reflection

Sometimes we spend enormous amounts of energy trying to imagine how God could possibly solve the problem in front of:
Us.
We examine every:
Option.
Every resource.
Every possibility.
And eventually we conclude:
I cannot see a way:
Out.

That may be absolutely:
True.
We may not see one.
The woman in Verse 15 probably did not look at the ground beneath her feet and think:
There is my:
Answer.
The answer appeared only when the earth opened its:
Mouth.
And perhaps that is something worth remembering.
God's provision does not have to be visible before the crisis in order to be:
Real.
Sometimes the answer is already present in a form we do not yet:
Recognize.
The person we have not met.
The opportunity we have not considered.
The strength we do not know we possess because God has not yet called us to:
Use it.
The ordinary circumstance that will suddenly become:
Important.
Or simply the sustaining grace that will be sufficient when the moment:
Comes.
Faith does not mean we know how God will:
Help.
Faith means our inability to imagine the answer does not mean God has no:
Answer.
The dragon had a river.
The woman could see the:
Flood.
God had an earth.
And the earth had been beneath her feet the entire: Time.

## Something Worth Pondering

At the end of Verse 15, the most important thing in the picture appears to be the:
Flood.
By the end of Verse 16—
the flood is:
Gone.
How quickly the thing dominating our vision can cease to dominate the:
Story.
That does not mean every crisis disappears as quickly as this visionary river.
Some wilderness seasons remain:

Long.
Some prayers require long:
Waiting.
Some suffering must simply be:
Endured.
But Verse 16 reminds us not to confuse what fills our vision today with what will define our story:
Forever.
The flood may be the biggest thing you can see.
It is not necessarily the biggest thing God can:
Use.

**Ask Yourself This:**

Have I assumed there is no answer simply because I cannot yet see one?
Can I recognize that needing help is not evidence of weak faith but part of living in dependence upon God?
And when the flood seems larger than every resource I possess, can I remember—
the dragon may have a river,
but God has an earth?

# A Closer Look — Revelation 12:17

**“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”**
— Revelation 12:17, KJV

The dragon has failed:
Again.
The child is beyond his:
Reach.
The woman has:
Escaped.
The flood has been:
Swallowed.
And now—
the dragon is:
Angry.
But his anger does not simply:
Disappear.
It finds another:
Target.
The rest of her:
Children.
And John tells us exactly how these people are:
Recognized.
They keep the commandments of:
God.
And they hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
That is who the dragon goes to war:
Against.

## 1. “Then”

Again the action follows what came:
Before.
The flood has been:
Swallowed.
The woman's destruction has been:
Prevented.
**Then** the dragon becomes:
Angry.
His anger grows out of another:

Failure.

## 2. The Dragon Keeps Losing

We should remember the:
Record.
He waited to devour the:
Child.
Failed.
He fought in:
Heaven.
Failed.
He pursued the:
Woman.
Failed.
He sent the:
Flood.
Failed.
Now he prepares another:
Attack.
The dragon is persistent.
He is also repeatedly:
Defeated.

## 3. “The Dragon Was Wroth”

We have already encountered his great:
Wrath.
Now John describes his anger specifically toward the:
Woman.
The language communicates:
Fury.
Frustration.
Hostility.
But we must keep remembering:
Anger is not:
Sovereignty.

## 4. The Dragon's Anger Is the Anger of Frustration

Why is he:
Angry?
Because his purposes keep being:
Thwarted.
The woman was supposed to be swept:
Away.
Instead—
the earth swallowed the:
River.

The dragon's anger is not evidence that his power has:
Increased.
It is evidence that his plan has failed:
Again.

## 5. Rage Does Not Mean Victory

This has become one of Chapter 12's important:
Lessons.
The dragon becomes:
Louder.
More violent.
More:
Determined.
But none of those things means he is:
Winning.
Sometimes rage is the sound of a defeated enemy who knows his time is:
Short.

## 6. “With the Woman”

The woman remains the focus of his:
Anger.
Why?
Because she stands within the story of God's redemptive:
Purpose.
She gave birth to the:
Child.
She belongs to the covenant story through which God's Messiah has:
Come.
The dragon's hostility toward her is ultimately rooted in his hostility toward:
God.

## 7. “Went”

The dragon:
Leaves.
He cannot accomplish what he intended against the:
Woman.
So he goes:
Elsewhere.
Again the target:
Changes.
But the hostility remains the:
Same.
The conflict is about to:
Broaden.

## 8. Failure Makes the Dragon Look for Another Target

This is a sobering movement in the:
Verse.
He cannot reach the:
Child.
He cannot destroy the:
Woman.
So he turns toward her:
Children.
The dragon's opposition moves from the central figures of the vision toward a wider community of:
Faithful people.

## 9. “To Make War”

John does not soften the:
Language.
War.
Not disagreement.
Not inconvenience.
Not irritation.
War.
The imagery tells us that the conflict surrounding faithful allegiance to God is:
Serious.
The dragon regards faithful witness as something to be: Opposed.

## 10. But We Should Remember How Revelation Defines This War

The language is:
War.
But Revelation has already shown us how God's people:
Conquer.
Not by becoming more violent than the:
Dragon.
Not by mastering coercion.
Not by returning hatred for:
Hatred.
They conquer by:
The blood of the Lamb.
The word of their testimony.
And faithfulness even in the face of:
Death.

## 11. The Dragon's War and the Saints' Victory Use Different Weapons

That contrast is:
Crucial.
The dragon:
Threatens.
The saints:
Testify.
The dragon:
Deceives.
The saints bear witness to:
Truth.
The dragon uses:
Fear.
The saints remain:
Faithful.
The Church does not win the dragon's war by learning to fight like the:
Dragon.

## 12. “With the Remnant of Her Seed”

Now the woman's family becomes:
Larger.
The male child of Verse 5 occupies a unique place within the:
Vision.
He is the Messiah who rules the nations.
But the woman has other:
Children.
John now turns our attention toward:
Them.

## 13. The Conflict Reaches the Wider People of God

Whatever fullness we allow the symbol of the woman to carry, Verse 17 clearly expands the conflict toward those who faithfully belong to:
God.
The vision is no longer only about the birth of the:
Messiah.
It is about the people who live in allegiance to the Messiah after His:
Enthronement.
The story has reached the:
Church.

## 14. John Does Not Leave Their Identity Entirely Mysterious

This is important.
We could spend enormous amounts of time asking:

Who exactly are the rest of her:
Children?
But John immediately gives us a description.
They are those who:
Keep the commandments of God.
And:
Hold the testimony of Jesus.
Instead of beginning with speculation—
we should begin with what John actually:
Says.

## 15. “Which Keep”

The first characteristic is:
Persistence.
They:
Keep.
They do not merely know God's:
Commandments.
Admire them.
Discuss them.
Debate them.
They:
Keep them.
Their allegiance becomes visible in the way they:
Live.

## 16. “The Commandments of God”

Faithfulness has an ethical:
Shape.
Revelation is not merely about understanding prophetic:
Symbols.
It is about living faithfully before:
God.
The people of God are distinguished by:
Obedience.
What we believe about God affects how we:
Live.

## 17. Obedience Matters Most When Obedience Costs Something

It is relatively easy to obey when obedience agrees with everything around:
Us.
The real test comes when obedience becomes:
Costly.
When compromise would be:

Easier.
When silence would be:
Safer.
When accommodation would bring:
Comfort.
These believers continue to:
Keep.

## 18. Keeping Does Not Mean Sinless Perfection

We should be careful:
Here.
John is not describing people who have never:
Failed.
Verse 11 already grounded their victory in the blood of the:
Lamb.
Their hope is not flawless:
Performance.
Keeping God's commandments describes the direction of their:
Allegiance.
When they fall—
they still belong to the:
Lamb.

## 19. “And Have”

Then comes another strong:
Verb.
Hold.
They keep.
And they:
Hold.
Both words suggest:
Persistence.
The pressure is real.
The temptation to let go is:
Real.
But they continue to:
Hold.

## 20. “The Testimony of Jesus Christ”

Here is the second defining characteristic.
The testimony of:
Jesus.
Their identity is centered upon:
Christ.
They bear witness to:
Him.

They confess:
Him.
They remain aligned with:
Him.
Whatever the dragon threatens—
they will not relinquish: Jesus.

## 21. Verse 11 Returns to Us

Only a few verses earlier we heard:
"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."
Now we hear:
"Have the testimony of Jesus Christ."
The connection is difficult to:
Miss.
The very thing through which the saints conquer is the thing the dragon wants them to:
Release.

## 22. The Dragon Wants Them to Let Go

That may be the simplest way to understand the:
Conflict.
The saints:
Hold.
The dragon wants them to:
Let go.
Let go of:
Truth.
Let go of:
Obedience.
Let go of:
Witness.
Let go of:
Christ.
The dragon does not necessarily need them to become devoted followers of:
Him.
He only needs them to stop being faithful followers of:
Jesus.

## 23. Sometimes Endurance Is Simply Holding On

There are seasons when faith feels:
Strong.
Confident.
Victorious.
There are other seasons when faith may feel like little more than:
Holding on.

And Revelation does not despise that kind of:
Faith.
Hold the testimony.
Keep the commandments.
Do not:
Let go.
Sometimes that is what conquering looks:
Like.

## 24. The Dragon's Target Reveals What He Fears

Whom does the dragon go to war:
Against?
Those with the most:
Money?
Political influence?
Social status?
Earthly power?
That is not how John describes:
Them.
They keep God's commandments.
They hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
Faithful allegiance to the Lamb is what places them in opposition to the:
Dragon.

## 25. The Church Must Never Confuse Its Human Opponents With the Dragon

This is an important pastoral:
Guardrail.
Revelation pulls back the curtain on spiritual:
Conflict.
But that does not give Christians permission to label every person who opposes them a:
Dragon.
People remain people.
People we are commanded to:
Love.
People for whom Christ:
Died.
The Church's struggle against evil must never become an excuse to:
Dehumanize.

## 26. Spiritual Warfare Is Fundamentally About Allegiance

Revelation's picture of spiritual warfare is far deeper than dramatic displays of:
Power.
The central question is:
Whom will you worship?
Whom will you:
Obey?
Whose testimony will you:
Hold?
Whose version of reality will you:
Believe?
The battlefield runs directly through human:
Allegiance.

## 27. The Dragon Can Make War—But He Cannot Force Worship

This becomes increasingly important as we approach Chapter: 13
The dragon can:
Threaten.
Pressure.
Deceive.
Persecute.
Coerce.
But allegiance remains the crucial:
Question.
God's people conquer when they refuse to give the dragon what ultimately belongs to:
God.
Their worship.
Their obedience.
Their:
Testimony.

## 28. Faithfulness Is the Victory the Dragon Cannot Understand

The dragon understands:
Power.
Threat.
Force.
Fear.
Death.
What he continually fails to understand is the strange power of:

Faithfulness.
He threatens death.
They keep:
Testifying.
He demands compromise.
They keep:
Obeying.
He wages war.
They keep following the:
Lamb.
And heaven calls them:
Conquerors.

## 29. This Verse Prepares Us for Chapter 13

The dragon goes off to wage:
War.
How will he wage that:
War?
Revelation 13:1 will place John beside the:
Sea.
And Chapter 13 will show us the beast rising from:
It.
The conflict is about to take on new:
Forms.
Political power.
False worship.
Deception.
Coercion.
Economic pressure.
But the central question will remain:
Allegiance.

## 30. Keep and Hold

Perhaps those are the two words we should carry from Verse: 17
Keep.
And:
Hold.
Keep the commandments of:
God.
Hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
When the dragon rages:
Keep.
When the pressure increases:
Hold.

When compromise looks easier:
Keep.
When testimony becomes costly:
Hold.
The dragon's time is:
Short.
The Lamb's kingdom is:
Forever.

## Pastoral Reflection

Most of us probably imagine heroic faithfulness as something:
Dramatic.
Standing before a hostile crowd.
Facing persecution.
Making some enormous declaration of:
Faith.
And sometimes faithfulness does look like:
That.
But Revelation 12:17 gives us two surprisingly ordinary verbs:
Keep.
Hold.
Keep God's:
Commandments.
Hold the testimony of:
Jesus.
Sometimes the greatest act of spiritual courage is simply continuing to do tomorrow what faithfulness required of us:
Today.
Tell the:
Truth.
Love your:
Neighbor.
Forgive.
Pray.
Serve.
Refuse bitterness.
Refuse deception.
Remain faithful to:
Christ.
Keep.
Hold.
The dragon may prefer something dramatic because dramatic things frighten:
Us.
But faithfulness is often built through thousands of quiet decisions not to let:

Go.
And there may be days when holding the testimony of Jesus does not feel very:
Heroic.
You may feel tired.
Discouraged.
Uncertain.
You may feel as though you are hanging on by your:
Fingertips.
But if you are still holding—
you have not:
Let go.
And perhaps heaven sees more victory in that than we:
Realize.

## Something Worth Pondering

The dragon goes to war against people described by two:
Things.
Obedience.
Testimony.
Not fame.
Not influence.
Not power.
Not success.
Faithfulness.
That should tell us something about what heaven:
Values.
And perhaps it should tell us something about what the dragon cannot:
Stand.
A faithful Christian does not need to control the world to threaten the kingdom of:
Darkness.
He or she simply needs to:
Keep.
And:
Hold.
Because every person who continues obeying God and bearing witness to Jesus is living proof that the dragon has not:
Won.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When faithfulness becomes costly, am I tempted to measure success by comfort rather than obedience?

Is there some part of the testimony of Jesus that pressure is tempting me to loosen my grip on?
And if my faith feels less like conquering and more like simply holding on—can I believe that heaven may call those two things the same?
Keep.
Hold.
Do not let go.

# Transition — Revelation 13:1: At the Edge of the Sea

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea"
— Revelation 13:1, KJV (opening words)

The KJV ends Chapter 12 with the dragon making war against the remnant of the woman's seed.
The next scene opens with John's words:
"And I stood upon the sand of the sea."
This shoreline study therefore serves as a transition into Revelation 13.
The person standing on the sand in the KJV is:
John.
We should not turn those words into a statement that the dragon is standing there.
The dragon remains the defeated and dangerous enemy identified in Chapter 12.
But John is the witness through whose eyes we now see what rises from the:
Sea.

## 1. "And"

The vision continues.
Chapter 12 has identified the spiritual conflict behind the Church's struggle.
Chapter 13 will show us the beastly forms through which that opposition operates.
The chapter boundary does not break the continuity of the:
Vision.

## 2. The Dragon's War Continues

The dragon has failed to devour the child.
He has been cast out of heaven.
The woman has been nourished and helped.
Yet he goes to make war with those who keep God's commandments and have the testimony of:
Jesus Christ.
His defeat is real.
So is his continuing:
Hostility.

## 3. "I Stood"

John remains the receiving witness.
He is not directing the vision.
He is being shown what the churches need to:
See.

That distinction matters.
The scene is not centered upon the dragon's posture.
It prepares John—and the reader—to behold another:
Threat.

## 4. We Know More About the Enemy Than His Names

Before we meet the beast, we already know the dragon's:
Record.
He tried to devour the child.
Failed.
He fought in heaven.
Failed.
The woman received help despite his:
Attack.
The enemy is dangerous.
But he is not:
Undefeated.

## 5. We Know Something Else

His time is:
Short.
Whatever happens next belongs within that limit.
His fury is great.
His future is:
Not.

## 6. John Stands Before What He Has Not Yet Seen

The shoreline is a place of:
Expectation.
John will see a beast rise up out of the sea.
We should let the vision unfold before assigning every detail a modern:
Equivalent.

## 7. The Next Scene Does Not Cancel the Previous Victory

A new threat does not mean the Lamb has lost His:
Throne.
Chapter 12 has already told us how the saints overcome.
We carry that truth into Chapter:
13.

## 8. "Upon the Sand"

The picture places John at the boundary between land and:
Sea.
It is a threshold in the unfolding:
Vision.

## 9. "Of the Sea"

The next words of Revelation 13:1 describe a beast rising from the sea.

The sea is the setting from which this new manifestation of opposition:
Appears.
We read it with the warning of Chapter 12 still before us:
“Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea!”

## 10. We Should Let the Sea Speak in Context

The sea carries rich imagery throughout biblical:
Literature.
Chaos.
Danger.
Restlessness.
Threat.
The nations.
Forces beyond human:
Control.
But as always—
we should resist turning every symbol into a rigid:
Formula.
John will show us what matters about this sea in the very next:
Scene.

## 11. Something Will Rise From the Sea

Chapter 13 begins with a beast rising out of the:
Sea.
The opening of Revelation 13 functions like the first note of the next:
Movement.
John stands.
The sea waits.
Then the beast:
Appears.
Chapter 12 has identified the spiritual enemy.
Chapter 13 will show us one way his opposition becomes embodied within the:
World.

## 12. The Dragon Does Not Work Alone

This becomes important for everything that:
Follows.
The dragon works through:
Others.
He delegates.
Empowers.
Deceives.
Manipulates.
He works through structures and authorities that advance his:
Purposes.

The cosmic conflict begins taking recognizable earthly:
Forms.

## 13. Chapter 12 Gives Us the Dragon Before Chapter 13 Gives Us the Beast

That order is:
Important.
John wants us to know what lies behind the beastly power before he shows us the:
Beast.
The beast is not the ultimate:
Enemy.
The dragon is behind:
It.
And even the dragon is not the center of:
Revelation.
The Lamb is.

## 14. The Beast Must Never Become the Center

Chapter 13 has attracted enormous amounts of:
Attention.
The beasts.
The mark.
The number.
The buying and selling.
Those images fascinate:
Readers.
But Revelation has already taught us where to keep our:
Eyes.
The throne.
The Lamb.
The kingdom.
The testimony of:
Jesus.
If our study of the beast makes the beast larger than the Lamb—
we have misread the:
Vision.

## 15. We Enter Chapter 13 Already Knowing the Ending

This is one of Revelation's greatest pastoral:
Gifts.
John does not introduce the beast before telling us who ultimately:
Wins.
We already know:
The kingdom belongs to God and His Messiah.

The dragon has been:
Defeated.
The saints conquer through the blood of the:
Lamb.
The dragon's time is:
Short.
So whatever rises from the sea—
we already know it does not receive the final:
Word.

## 16. The Dragon's New Strategy Will Involve Earthly Power

We should not rush ahead of Chapter: 13
The opening of Revelation 13 deliberately prepares us for what follows.
The dragon's war against God's people will not remain merely an invisible spiritual:
Conflict.
It will become visible through forces operating within human:
History.
Power can become:
Beastly.
Authority can become:
Idolatrous.
Empire can demand what belongs only to:
God.

## 17. Revelation Was Speaking to Real Churches

This matters.
The first readers were not solving an abstract prophetic:
Puzzle.
They lived within the Roman:
World.
They understood imperial:
Power.
Public worship.
Social pressure.
Economic consequences.
Political authority.
They knew that allegiance to Jesus could collide with the claims of:
Empire.
The beast imagery spoke into a world they actually:
Inhabited.

## 18. But We Should Not Reduce the Beast to Only One Moment

At the same time—
Revelation's imagery has a reach beyond one historical:
Expression.
Beastly power can reappear whenever human authority demands the allegiance that belongs to:
God.
That does not give us permission to label every government, leader, institution, or opponent a:
Beast.
It gives the Church a theological lens through which to recognize and resist:
Idolatry.

## 19. The Dragon Wants Worship

This will become unmistakable in Chapter: 13
The conflict is ultimately about:
Worship.
Who deserves ultimate:
Allegiance?
God?
Or the powers that oppose:
God?
The dragon's war is not merely about harming God's people.
It is about redirecting their:
Worship.

## 20. That Explains Why Testimony Matters

Verse 17 ended with people who:
Hold the testimony of Jesus.
The next chapter shows us the form that war will:
Take.
The sequence matters.
The dragon's coming strategy will place pressure upon that:
Testimony.
Will God's people continue to say:
Jesus is Lord—
when other powers demand their:
Allegiance?
That is the question Chapter 13 will increasingly:
Ask.

## 21. The Seashore Is a Threshold

Chapter 12 began with a sign in:
Heaven.

Our transition now brings us beside the:
Sea.
We have traveled from:
Heaven—
to earth—
to wilderness—
to:
Shoreline.
And now we stand at the boundary between the cosmic conflict we have seen and the beastly powers we are about to:
See.
The shoreline is a:
Threshold.

## 22. Do Not Be Intimidated by What Comes Next

Chapter 13 contains some of the most intimidating imagery in:
Revelation.
That is precisely why Chapter 12 comes:
First.
Before the beast—
the:
Lamb.
Before the mark—
the:
Testimony.
Before the dragon's earthly agents—
the dragon's heavenly:
Defeat.
Before the pressure to worship—
the proclamation that the kingdom belongs to:
God.
God gives us what we need before showing us what we must:
Face.

## 23. John Stands on the Sand—God Remains on the Throne

That contrast may be worth remembering.
John takes his place upon the:
Sand.
But God remains upon the:
Throne.
The witness stands upon the:
Sand.
God reigns from heaven.
The earthly setting changes.

The other is:
Sovereign.
Never confuse a changing scene with a change in who:
Reigns.

## 24. Chapter 12 Has Changed How We Will Read Chapter 13

Without Chapter 12—
we might enter Chapter 13 terrified by the:
Beast.
After Chapter 12—
we enter knowing the beast belongs to the strategy of a defeated:
Dragon.
That does not make the beast harmless.
It places the beast within the correct:
Story.
Dangerous.
Powerful.
Deceptive.
But:
Temporary.

## 25. The Dragon Makes War—But He Does Not Write the Ending

That is where Chapter 12 leaves:
Us.
The dragon is still:
Present.
Still dangerous.
Still angry.
Still planning.
Still making:
War.
But he does not stand at the end of the:
Story.
The Lamb does.
John stands upon the:
Shore.
And we keep:
Reading.
Because Revelation gives us the ending so we can endure the:
Middle.

## Pastoral Reflection

There are moments in life when nothing appears to be:

Happening.
The immediate crisis has:
Passed.
The flood is:
Gone.
The pursuit has:
Stopped.
And yet something inside us whispers:
This is not:
Finished.
Revelation 12 ends in a moment like:
That.
The dragon simply:
Stands.
And sometimes waiting for the next trouble can be almost as difficult as facing the trouble we already:
Know.
We wonder:
What comes next?
What is out there?
What is about to rise from the:
Sea?
Fear loves unanswered:
Questions.
And if we are not careful—
we begin writing the next chapter before God has:
Shown it.
But Revelation has spent Chapter 12 teaching us how to face the chapter we have not yet:
Read.
Remember what you already:
Know.
The Child reached the:
Throne.
The dragon was:
Defeated.
The accuser was thrown:
Down.
The saints:
Conquered.
The blood of the Lamb is:
Enough.
The testimony of Jesus is worth:

Holding.
The dragon's time is:
Short.
So when you reach a shoreline and cannot see what comes:
Next—
do not let uncertainty erase everything God has already:
Revealed.
Danger may still lie ahead.
But so are the promises of:
God.
And only one of them will still be standing when the story is:
Finished.

## Something Worth Pondering

John begins the next chapter standing upon the:
Sand.
The witness faces a scene that has not yet fully unfolded before his:
Eyes.
Sand shifts.
Tides come.
Shorelines:
Move.
And the dragon's time is:
Short.
Meanwhile—
God's throne has not:
Moved.
Perhaps that is the picture we should carry:
Forward.
John on the sand.
A Lamb associated with the:
Throne.
The enemy is preparing another desperate:
Strategy.
The other already:
Reigns.
So when the beast rises in Chapter 13—
we will not meet him as readers who do not know how the story:
Ends.
We have already heard heaven's:
Verdict.

**Ask Yourself This:**

When I cannot see what is coming next, do I allow uncertainty to become more powerful than what God has already shown me?
Am I tempted to become so fascinated by the dragon, the beast, or the darkness that I lose sight of the Lamb?
And when I find myself standing at the edge of something unknown—
can I remember:
I may stand at an uncertain shoreline,
but God still sits on the throne?