Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

Title

9 March 2014 Series on Revelation Message 14 of 20

NLT 40 Minutes

**The Great Persecutor**

***Revelation 12***

**Topic:** Warfare

**Subject:** How can you be assured of Christ’s victory now and in the future?

**Complement:** In Satan’s epic war against Israel, Jesus and us… Jesus wins!

**Purpose:** The listeners will express hope in Christ’s victory in their fight against Satan.

**Song:** A Mighty Fortress (closing)

# Introduction

### Interest: [The movie “War & Remembrance” parallels Christ’s victory over Satan.]

#### “War & Remembrance” (ABC: November 13, 1988 – May 14, 1989)

War & Remem

##### Back when Susan and I were newly married, there was an epic miniseries on TV called “War and Remembrance.” Believe it or not, this series ran for 30 hours—three hours a night from Monday to Friday—for two weeks! This was the longest miniseries ever shown on American television! It was also the costliest single-story undertaking in United States television, costing $104 million.

##### Well, I am a World War II history buff so I was captivated by this series. For the whole week we neglected about everything in order to watch TV for three hours each night. My studies could wait, the finances and household chores could be postponed another week or so...you get the idea.

Cast

##### Like most series, when we finished one episode it gave us previews of the next night’s scenes. But the preview that really caught my eye was number 5, given on Friday night of the first week. It showed the Japanese severely weakened, the Germans about to surrender as the Allied forces hemmed in Berlin. Also, the development of the atomic bomb was finally complete.

Germans

##### Then came the clincher, as the announcer said, “See this final episode of ‘War & Remembrance’ to be shown in May!”

##### “May!” I exclaimed to Susan, “This is November! We have to wait six months to find out how the story ends? If that isn’t a ploy to get us to go by the video I don’t know what is!”

##### As I felt angry about investing 15 hours into the TV program and not being able to see last few episodes, I realized that this was actually unnecessary.

##### Why? Because I knew how the story ended! Though both the Japanese and the Germans were still holding on, I knew both countries would surrender in 1945. So I never did go by the video. Even today, 30 years later, I have yet to see the last episodes.

Japan Surrender

German Surrender

##### Why? I know the ending.

Our Epic War

### Now think about the *real epic war!* You and I are engaged in a war far more significant.

#### Ironically, WWII was called a “World War” while in many parts of the world there was no fighting. But the *real epic war in which we fight today* truly is a world war for it affects every nation and every person.

• • •

#### The war we are in right now has not lasted only six years but at least 6000 years!

#### Our enemy is not only out to kill our bodies but he’s the enemy of our very souls.

### Need: Do you feel like you are losing a lot of battles right now?

Losing?

#### Spiritually speaking, it seems like the world slips farther away from biblical values each day. I rarely hear good news—like I’m on the dark side of the moon!

#### Civil laws are constantly written that increasing contradict God’s laws.

#### Our young people in the church are leaving the faith—between 67-88% of teenagers in the church won’t worship there in their 20s.

### Subject: How can you be assured of Christ’s victory now and in the future?

Subject

### Background: Revelation 6–19 addresses many battles in the seven-year Tribulation era, but chapter 12 takes a step back at the big picture war of the ages. It affirms Christ’s victory over Satan.

Rev 6-19

(3 slides)

### Preview: Today we’ll see four key “characters” in the age-old drama that results in Christ’s victory.

Hope in Rev 12

Characters

### Text: Revelation 12 provides this hope when we feel like we’re losing the war.

(Let’s see the first “character” in the cast of the drama of the ages…)

# I. Israel (the woman) brought Jesus into the world with great difficulty (12:1-2).

MP

[Amidst much opposition, the nation still brought the Messiah to earth.]

1-2

## Israel has been God’s primary means of blessing humanity through Jacob (the sun) and Rachel (the moon) who brought the twelve tribes (the stars) into the world (12:1; Gen. 37:9-11; Isa. 60:1-3, 20).

## Through great difficulty, God enabled Israel to bring the Messiah into the world and will also cause Israel to emerge in the last days (12:2). Athaliah was a case in point, as she brought the messianic line down to one man for three consecutive generations!

Athaliah   
(5 slides)

MPI

(So Israel is key in the cast of characters in the age-old drama. Who, then, is the antagonist?)

# II. Satan and his demons (a dragon with stars) couldn’t kill the infant Jesus (12:3-4).

MP

[The devil lost the battle to kill Christ at his birth.]

## Satan (the dragon) will control two political entities of seven and ten nations each during the Tribulation (12:3).

3

## Satan had already been cast from heaven long ago with one third of the angels (12:4a; cf. Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:17).

4a

(5 slides)

## Satan’s opposition to God is legendary but best seen in his attempt to kill the baby Jesus through Herod (12:4b; cf. Matt. 2).

4b

(3 slides)

II

I

(Now the main character in this drama of the ages joins Israel against Satan. This is not baby Jesus, but the man Jesus.)

# III. Jesus beat Satan at His ascension and God will protect Israel in the Tribulation (12:5-6).

MP

[Christ thwarted Satan 2000 years ago and will preserving Jews in the future.]

## Israel brought forth Christ to rule the world (12:5a).

5

Stars

(2 slides)

5

## Satan’s attempts to destroy Christ’s life and ministry ended at Christ’s ascension (12:5b).

## Satan will likewise try to eradicate Jews for 3.5 years in the Tribulation but God will protect them in the wilderness (12:6; cf. Mark 13:14).

6 & Blood Moon (7 slides)

(Having been introduced to the key characters of the age-old drama of Israel, Satan, and Jesus, we now see the key angel behind the scenes...)

III

II

I

MP

# IV. Michael will cast Satan from heaven but he won’t destroy Israel in the Tribulation (12:7-18).

[God’s warrior angel will help Jews win over the devil in the days to come.]

## Michael’s victory over Satan in the Tribulation will force Satan and his demons out of heaven one final time (12:7-9).

9

8

7

## Heaven’s praise of God for defeating Satan and exalting Christ and his persecuted saints will contain a warning that Satan will be especially dangerous as he knows his time in limited (12:10-12).

10

11

12

## Satan will attempt to destroy Israel in the wilderness by pursuit (cf. Zech. 13:8) and flood, but God will protect her while Satan will be even more vicious towards believers (12:13-18).

13-18  
(23 slides)

Hope?

(So how can we live with confidence when facing an enemy like Satan who’s much stronger?)

# Conclusion

### In Satan’s epic war against Israel, Jesus and us… Jesus wins! (MI).

MI

### Don’t think Satan is a weakling with a pitchfork. He is far more cunning and stronger than us—but he’s weaker than Christ!

Accuse

Weak

### Hermann Goering said… [read quote]. We certainly don’t want war, but deceptive forces have gotten us into it. Some may doubt we are even in a war—but there is no such thing as a biblical pacifist in our war with Satan.

Goering Quote

### Main Points: On the losing side is Satan, but on the winning side are Israel, Michael and especially Jesus!

4 characters

### If Jesus wins and you are on his team, then you win too!

Jesus win

We win

### Exhortation:

How losing?

#### How is Satan winning over you now?

#### How can Christ claim the victory in your life now?

How to win?

### Martin Luther wrote “A Mighty Fortress” during a time of intense spiritual battle. He saw God as his fortress as seen in each of these four stanzas (explain pink words).

A Mighty Fortress  
(6 slides)

### Prayer means WAR! You can’t do more than pray!

Prayer is WAR

### Prayer

Black

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

# Questions

### Is this woman Mary since she was the mother of Jesus? No.

#### Many claim that this woman signifies the church.[[1]](#footnote-1)

##### *Mounce, though a premillennial scholar, identifies the woman as “the messianic community, the ideal Israel ... the church (Rev. 12:17). The people of God are one throughout all redemptive history.”*

#### *However, the text clearly shows the woman to be Israel:*

##### The woman brings forth Christ, which Israel did (whereas the Church did not bring forth Christ).

##### “The woman symbolized Israel, as indicated by Genesis 37:9-11, where the sun and the moon referred to Jacob and Rachel, Joseph’s parents.

##### “The stars in the woman’s crown clearly related to the 12 sons of Jacob and identified the woman as Israel fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant. J.B. Smith cites Isaiah 60:1-3, 20 as proof that the sun refers to Israel’s future glory (*A Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 182).”[[2]](#footnote-2)

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### Text

# Possible Applications

### Text

#### (Rev. 12–14) A parenthesis between the trumpet and bowl judgments provides additional information about Satan's activity and previews the final judgments to assure believers of their triumph and of the unbelievers' judgment.

##### (Rev. 12–13) Extra teaching on Satan and his activity to thwart God in the Tribulation gives insight into Israel's persecution and what believers at that time should do.

###### (Ch. 12) Satan has long persecuted Israel and Christ.

(12:1-2) Israel, in the sign of a pregnant woman, travails to bring Jesus Christ into the world as a man.

*Is this woman Mary since she was the mother of Jesus? No.*



*Many claim that this woman signifies the church.[[3]](#footnote-3)*

*Mounce, though a premillennial scholar, identifies the woman as “the messianic community, the ideal Israel ... the church (Rev. 12:17). The people of God are one throughout all redemptive history.”*

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(12:3-4) Satan and his demons, signified by a dragon with stars, unsuccessfully seek to destroy the infant Jesus.

Satan and his demons, signified by a dragon with stars, unsuccessfully seek to destroy the infant Jesus (12:3-4).

Jesus escapes Satan in His ascension to await His Millennial rule while Israel is protected during the last three and a half years of the Tribulation (12:5-6).

Satan is cast from heaven where he accuses the saints and unsuccessfully seeks to destroy Israel in the Great Tribulation (12:7-21).

**The Great Persecutor**

***Revelation 12***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The way believers can have hope in Satan’s persecuting Israel and Christ is that God tells us in advance that Christ will be Victor.

# I. Israel, symbolized as a pregnant woman, brought Jesus into the world with great difficulty (12:1-2).

## Israel has been God’s primary means of blessing humanity through Jacob (the sun) and Rachel (the moon) who brought the twelve tribes (the stars) into the world (12:1; Gen. 37:9-11; Isa. 60:1-3, 20).

## Through great difficulty, God enabled Israel to bring the Messiah into the world and will also cause Israel to emerge in the last days (12:2).

# II. Satan and his demons, signified by a dragon with stars, unsuccessfully tried to destroy the infant Jesus (12:3-4).

## Satan (the dragon) will control two political entities of seven and ten nations each during the Tribulation (12:3).

## Satan had already been cast from heaven long ago with one third of the angels (12:4a; cf. **Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:17**).

## Satan’s opposition to God is legendary but best seen in his attempt to kill the baby Jesus through Herod (12:4b; cf. Matt. 2).

# III. As Jesus escaped Satan in His ascension to await his millennial rule, so God will protect Israel during the last three and a half years of the Tribulation (12:5-6).

## Israel brought forth Christ to rule the world (12:5a).

## Satan’s attempts to destroy Christ’s life and ministry ended at Christ’s ascension (12:5b).

## Satan will likewise try to eradicate Jews for 3.5 years in the Tribulation but God will protect them in the wilderness (12:6; cf. Mark 13:14).

# IV. Michael will cast Satan from heaven and Satan will unsuccessfully seek to destroy Israel in the Great Tribulation (12:7-18).

## Michael’s victory over Satan in the Tribulation will force Satan and his demons out of heaven one final time (12:7-9).

## Heaven’s praise of God for defeating Satan and exalting Christ and his persecuted saints will contain a warning that Satan will be especially dangerous as he knows his time in limited (12:10-12).

## Satan will attempt to destroy Israel in the wilderness by pursuit (cf. Zech. 13:8) and flood, but God will protect her while Satan will be even more vicious towards believers (12:13-18).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will express hope in Christ’s victory in their fight against Satan.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: The epic movie “War & Remembrance” parallels Christ’s victory in our war with Satan.

### Need: Do you feel like you are losing a lot of battles right now?

### Subject: How can you be assured of Christ’s victory now and in the future?

### Background: Revelation 6–19 addresses many battles in the seven-year Tribulation era, but chapter 12 takes a step back at the big picture war of the ages. It affirms Christ’s victory over Satan.

### Preview: Today we’ll see four “key characters” in the age-old drama that results in Christ’s victory.

### Text: Revelation 12 is our text that provides this hope when we feel like we’re losing the war.

(Let’s see the first “character” in the cast of the drama of the ages…)

# I. Israel (the woman) brought Jesus into the world with great difficulty (12:1-2).

## Israel has been God’s primary means of blessing humanity through Jacob (the sun) and Rachel (the moon) who brought the twelve tribes (the stars) into the world (12:1; Gen. 37:9-11; Isa. 60:1-3, 20).

## Through great difficulty, God enabled Israel to bring the Messiah into the world and will also cause Israel to emerge in the last days (12:2).

# II. Satan and his demons (a dragon with stars) couldn’t kill the infant Jesus (12:3-4).

## Satan (the dragon) will control two political entities of seven and ten nations each during the Tribulation (12:3).

## Satan had already been cast from heaven long ago with one third of the angels (12:4a; cf. Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:17).

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(So how can we live with confidence when facing an enemy like Satan who’s much stronger?)

# Conclusion

### In Satan’s epic war against Israel, Jesus and us… Jesus wins! (MI).

### Main Points: On the losing side is Satan, but on the winning side are Israel, Michael and especially Jesus!

### Exhortation:

#### How is Satan winning over you now?

#### How can Christ claim the victory in your life now?



**Rick Griffith**

9 March 2014

Message 14 of 20

**The Great Persecutor**

***Revelation 12***

# Introduction

### The epic miniseries “War & Remembrance” parallels Christ’s victory in our war with Satan.

### Do you feel like you are losing a lot of battles right now?

### How can you be assured of Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ now and in the future?

### Revelation 6–19 addresses many battles in the seven-year Tribulation era, but chapter 12 takes a step back at the big picture war of the ages. It affirms Christ’s victory over Satan in a cast of four characters.

# I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (the woman) brought Jesus into the world with great difficulty (12:1-2).

## Israel has been God’s primary means of blessing humanity through Jacob (the sun) and Rachel (the moon) who brought the twelve tribes (the stars) into the world (12:1; Gen. 37:9-11; Isa. 60:1-3, 20).

## Through great difficulty, God enabled Israel to bring the Messiah into the world and will also cause Israel to emerge in the last days (12:2).

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## Satan will attempt to destroy Israel in the wilderness by pursuit (cf. Zech. 13:8) and flood, but God will protect her while Satan will be even more vicious towards believers (12:13-18).

(So how can we live with confidence when facing an enemy like Satan who’s much stronger?)

# Conclusion

### In Satan’s epic war against Israel, Jesus and us… Jesus ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_! (Main Idea).

### To consider:

#### How is Satan winning over you now?

#### How can Christ claim the victory in your life now?

**Thought Questions:**

1. Read Revelation 12 aloud. What methods here does Satan use to oppose God’s plan? How has God responded to each strategy in the past and how does he do it now?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Satan’s Method (give verse)** | **God’s Response (give verse)** |
| He enters heaven itself (3a) | He allows Satan to appear before Him |
| He seeks God’s permission (3b; cf. Job 1) | He allows Satan an audience |
| He works through politics (3c) | He allows these alignments |
| He convinced 1/3 of angels to rebel (4a) | He allowed the exit (cf. Luke 10:18) |
| He waits for opportune times to attack (4b) | He is even more patient (cf. 2 Pet 3:9) |
| He seeks to destroy Israel (4c) | He curses the cursers (Gen. 12:3) |
| He tried to kill Jesus via Herod (4c) | He ascended Jesus to heaven (5) |
| He causes Israel to flee (6a) | God protects Israel 1260 days (6b) |
| He will attack Michael (7) | He empowers Michael for victory (7) |
| He is sneaky like a snake (9; cf. Gen. 3) | He tells us the truth |
| He accuses believers (10) | God cleanses by the Lamb’s blood (11) |
| He has anger that he can’t be in control (12) | He has righteous wrath |
| He tries to show authority for a time (12) | He gave Jesus authority (10; Mt 28:18) |
| He seeks to destroy Israel (13) | He protects Israel 42 months (14) |
| He tries to drown Israel in the desert (15) | He gobbles up the water (16) |
| He seeks to kill the rest of the Jews (17) | God protects them (assumed) |

1. When have you been deceived by Satan? How did you eventually overcome this?

I don’t know—that’s why I was deceived!

Sometimes I’ve felt that giving less will give more money—but it didn’t work!

I thought I could marry a woman who wasn’t godly—but God delivered me

1. In what area do you now experience Satan’s opposition to God’s plan for you? What should you do about this?

Satan seeks to distract me through my sons not following Christ

My role is to pray unceasingly for them and me

1. Robert L. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Walvoord, *BKC*, emphasis mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Robert L. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Walvoord, *BKC*, emphasis mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)