

The Dragon's War



Against the Remnant

8 in a series

Introduction

There have always been wars in our world - both large and small. History shows how humanity has an incredible capacity to inflict atrocities on each other. Wars seem to bring out the worst of human nature and we often stand aghast at the demonstration of human's inhumanity toward one another.

In wartime we expect casualties to occur. Soldiers will surely die and we are always saddened at this outcome. Perhaps even sadder is the death of innocent people who somehow get caught in the crossfire. In this lesson we will study chapters 12 and 13 of Revelation where we see an incredible battle taking place between two mighty opponents. On one side we see the God of heaven, His angels, and His people. On the other side is Satan and the powers of darkness. It is a spiritual battle of the righteousness of God against the wickedness of Satan.

Humanity is caught in the middle of this spiritual war whether we're aware of the battle or not. The good news for those who've placed their faith in Christ is we are on the winning side even if it appears as we are losing - Christ's sacrifice on a cross has guaranteed our victory. In the meantime, it is through His strength that we will survive this spiritual battle and ultimately see a promised world without sin and suffering. That's the promise of Revelation.

In this lesson we look at two very important issues. First of all, we will see what Revelation says about the "remnant" people of God. The remnant are God's people at the end of time. Secondly, we will see Revelation's focus on God's "Ten Commandments" and how they apply to God's people during end times.

Overview for Session #8

1. **A Summary of "The Cosmic Conflict"**
2. **A link between Daniel and Revelation**
3. **The Biblical Remnant**
4. **The Ten Commandments in Revelation**

1. A Summary of "The Cosmic Conflict"

In our last lesson, we saw how a created being who we know as Satan rebelled against his Creator. He gained the allegiance of one third of the angels of heaven in the battle (Rev. 12:4). Satan lost his spiritual battle with Christ when Jesus died on the cross and secured salvation for anyone who believe in Him and surrender their own lives to Christ. Yet there is still a battle going on and will continue until Christ's "second coming".

This on-going spiritual battle we see in the universe is often referred to as “The Cosmic Conflict” (or even “The Great Controversy”). Revelation promises at the end of time that evil will come to a complete end and will never again exist in the universe (Rev. 21:4-7).

Until this promised time, Satan will continue to oppose God’s people on Earth. Yet God has not forsaken His people. They will receive His guidance and protection while they are in the land of the enemy. Interestingly, they are distinguished from all other people in the world by two very important characteristics. God’s people at the end of time are described as those who (1) obey God’s commandments and also (2) hold on to the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17). While Satan’s fury is poured out on them and we see a world full of violence and suffering, it is only a matter of time before these faithful souls will inherit a kingdom ruled by eternal peace and happiness.

Revelation 12:13-17¹³ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.^[a]



Question 1: Who persecuted the woman? Who is the woman and who is the dragon?

2. A Link Between Daniel and Revelation

We saw in our last lesson that the dragon is a symbol of Satan, the woman is a symbol of the God's people (i.e. "the church"), and the male child is Jesus. The time period mentioned in Revelation 12:14 ("*a time and times and half a time*") takes place sometime after Jesus' death. In the verses that follow we're told some information about "the woman" and her offspring.

In the book of Revelation there are many connections with the Old Testament book of Daniel. In Revelation chapter 12 and 13 we see a number of parallels with Daniel chapter 7 that are key to understanding Revelation. For examples:

- Both visions have a time period referred to as a "time, times, and half a time (see Revelation 12:14 and Daniel 7:25)
- The beasts of both visions come out of the sea (see Revelation 13:1 & Daniel 7:2)
- Both beasts have ten horns (see Revelation 13 and Daniel 7:7)
- The beasts of both visions involve a leopard, a bear and a lion (see Revelation 13:2 and Daniel 7:4-6)

Question 2: Do you see the strong link between Daniel chapter 7 and Revelation chapter 13?

The time period of Revelation 12:14 ("*a time and times and half a time*") is a biblical expression for 3.5 years. A word translated as "time" is the same word in Hebrew for a year, a "times" (plural) is Hebrew for two years, and a "half time" is self-explanatory – i.e. half a year. This period of 3.5 years is repeated in Revelation 13:5 when the beast is blaspheming against God for 42 months which is equal to 3.5 years. This same time period also referred to in Revelation as 1260 days (the Jewish year consisted of 360 days).

Since it is mentioned so often, this time period of 3.5 years (or 1,260 days) is obviously significant. The intriguing question is: What does it mean?

As we have noted previously, Revelation is a symbolic book and to view this number literally does not make any sense in Christian history. There is no 3.5 year period after Christ's death that identifies with the protection of the church in the wilderness.

It does make sense, however, when we apply the Bible's symbolic "day for a year" principle. Here are two texts that use this method.

Ezekiel 4:6 "And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year."

Numbers 14:34 "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection."

Question 3: How can we interpret the time period of 1,260 days seen in Rev. 11:3 & 12:6?

So, is there a time period in Christian history of 1,260 years where God's people had a "wilderness experience" and required special care as described in Revelation 14:12? We will look at that question in our next session and discover what that means for us today. In this time prophecy, we will identify some of Satan's strategies which the dragon has used to attack "the woman" (God's people). Many are greatly surprised at the tactics used by the evil one, and it's a lesson you won't want to miss.

3. The Biblical Remnant

Let's take a look at Revelation 12:17



*¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the **rest of her offspring**, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

After this 1,260 year period of Satan’s attacks on the church in the wilderness, the Devil makes war with those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12:17). **Who are “the rest of her offspring”?** These are the “remnant” - those who remain true to God in the last time period of this world. These are faithful Christians who live in the time just preceding the Second Coming of Jesus.

It’s important to understand the Bible describes other important “remnants” throughout history. Here are some examples:

- *Jacob’s family when they migrated to Egypt (Genesis 45:7)*
- *Elijah was concerned he was the only one faithful to God, but was told by God that there remained 7,000 faithful believers in Israel (1 Kings 19: 10 – 18)*
- *The tribe of Judah are the remnant of Israel after the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:18)*
- *When the kingdom of Babylon defeated Judah in 586 BC, those who remained in Jerusalem were referred to as the remnant (see Jeremiah 23:3, 31:7, 40:11, 44:14).*

Throughout history God has always had “a remnant” of believers when it appeared all was lost. The Apostle Paul says in **Romans 11:5** – *“Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”* It is therefore logical there would also be a remnant at the very end of time. These people are distinguished as continuing to honour God’s commandments and they remain true to Jesus.

The remnant people throughout history have never been those who followed the majority. These people made deliberate decisions to be true to God even though it wasn’t the popular thing to do. It will be no different when Jesus’ “Second Coming” draws near - the end time remnant will be intentional about being obedient to God even though it puts them in a minority, even among Christian circles.

It’s important to examine our own personal standing with our Creator and ask the following question: **Am I willing to follow God’s call on my life, even if it puts me at odds to most other people?** If so, the Bible calls you His “remnant”.

Question 4: Do you wish to be a part of God’s “remnant”? _____

Question 5: What might be some barriers to being a part of God’s remnant and being fully obedient to His commandments and call on our life? _____

4. The Ten Commandments in Revelation

As we have seen, the remnant people obey God's commandments (Revelation 12:17). The context in Revelation means this is referring to God's Ten Commandments. These important Commandments for our relationship with our Creator and with each other were written by God Himself on tables of stone at Mount Sinai and handed to the prophet Moses (Exodus chapters 19 – 20).

So, how do we see the Ten Commandments specifically mentioned in the book of Revelation?

Firstly, the important middle "sanctuary scene" that launches the vision of Revelation chapters 12-14 features the Ark of the Covenant which contained the Ten Commandments (see Revelation 11:19).

Secondly, in chapters 13 and 14, the first four of the Ten Commandments are on display – these four commandments deal with our personal relationship with God.

Thirdly, in the fifth sanctuary scene (see Revelation 15:5-8) we see a specific reference to the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are also known in the Bible by two other names (see Exodus 34:28-29):

- The Words of the Covenant
- The Tablets of the Testimony

Revelation uses these descriptions of the Ten Commandments to describe how God's people show their obedience to Him.

Question 6: Can you see how being obedient to the Ten Commandments shows our response to the grace offered by faith in Jesus Christ? _____

We read in Revelation 12:17 how the remnant are obedient to the commandments of God. God's people not only have a personal relationship with their Creator but display their faithfulness to their Saviour through honouring the first four of the Ten Commandments. This relationship with God then overflows in obedience to the last six Commandments, which deal with our relationship with each other.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN SCRIPTURE

Exodus 24:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the LAW AND COMMANDMENTS WHICH I HAVE WRITTEN, that you may teach them."

Exodus 31:18

And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, TABLETS OF STONE, WRITTEN WITH THE FINGER OF GOD.



The Bible has been written by God's people under inspiration by His Holy Spirit. However, Scripture tells us the Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God Himself (Exodus 31:18, Deuteronomy 9:10). This indicates the importance God places on them. Jesus said He wasn't abolishing the law but showing how they were to be lived out (Matthew 5:17-20).

The Ten Commandments were written with God's own finger. The only part of the Bible written directly by God!

So, where were the Ten Commandments located?
Exodus 25:16 "And you shall put INTO THE ARK THE TESTIMONY which I will give you."

In the temple sanctuary a small box called the "ark" was the resting place of the Ten Commandments (and the Ten Commandments are often referred to as the "Testimony").

The Ten Commandments are recorded in full in Exodus 20:3-17. Briefly they are as follows:

1. You shall have no other Gods before Me.
2. You shall not make any graven image.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness.
10. You shall not covet.



The Ten Commandments were placed in the Ark.

QUESTION 7: Who wrote the Ten Commandments and where were they stored?

The first four commandments deal with our love to God, and the last six deal with our love for our fellow human beings. They can be divided into these two sections: to love God and love to others (see the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:37-40).

There is one underlying principle behind these commands – **LOVE**. In the Ten Commandments we see a summary of God’s character: “God is love” (1 John 4:8). At first glance the Ten Commandments may appear to be a list of “don’ts”, but when a Christian is motivated by love, they want to please God and respect their fellow humans.

SOME FINAL NOTES ON THE “REMNANT”

Revelation 12:17 And THE DRAGON WAS ENRAGED WITH THE WOMAN, and he went to make WAR WITH THE REST of her offspring, who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST.



In this bible verse we see is the devil’s final attempt to destroy God’s truth. His attack is made against the “Remnant” (the last of God’s people/church). Here God’s people are identified in the last days by the characteristic of keeping **the commandments of God** and also **having the testimony of**

Jesus. *This is the vital identifying mark of the church of God at the end of time.* These people will be teaching the same biblical truths as the church of the Apostles of Christ

1. THE REMNANT = THE LAST - they will exist just prior to Christ’s coming.
2. THE REMNANT = USUALLY SMALL - truth is usually in the minority. So, God’s last church will be small in number.
3. THE REMNANT = SAME AS ORIGINAL - identical teachings as the church of the Apostles.
4. THE REMNANT = They honour the Ten Commandments of God.
5. THE REMNANT = They focus on the Gospel as found in prophecy (compare “the testimony of Jesus in Revelation 12:17 with Revelation 19:10).

Will you respond to the call of God to your heart and become one of the faithful remnant? God has a glorious future planned for His people - a future that will last forever. God promises eternity to those who are faithful, love Jesus, and are motivated by love to honour His commandments.

Question 8: Give two identifying marks of the remnant church: _____

Question 9: Is it your desire to be part of God's plan and be seen as one of His remnant?

