

Blessed Endurance

The message of Revelation

LESSON SIX: BATTLE WRIT LARGE The Victorious Christ against the Serpent (12-15:4)

Introduction: where we've been

Everything in Revelation is symbolic unless it explicitly states it is literal.

The purpose of revelation is to encourage endurance in the midst of persecution.

We live in the end times .

Christians will endure tribulation as they await Christ's return.

The True Battle

Chapter 12 is the “center and key to the entire book”

The seven scenes of 12-15:4

1. Conflict between the serpent and the woman's seed (ch.12)
2. Persecution by the serpent's first beast (13:1-10)
3. Persecution by the serpent's second beast (13:11-18)
4. The Lamb and 144,000 appear in Zion (14:1-5)
5. The gospel and judgment proclaimed by angels (14:6-13)
6. The Son of Man harvests the earth (14:14-20)
7. The victory and song of the saints (15:1-4)

The Central Conflict

Chapter 12 describes the conflict between Satan and the people of God (the woman) culminating in his attack on the woman's seed (Christ).

After Jesus ascension, Satan's work becomes to "wage war" against his followers on earth in an attempt to thwart God's plan.

Chapter 13 describes how Satan wages war against God's people: The State

The Sea Beast: all the kingdoms of the world that demand worship (cf. Dan. 7:3-8)

The Land Beast: all those social, religious, and cultural pressures which attempt to coerce God's people to find their salvation and identity in the State

These forces are used by Satan to force believers into conflict with and persecution from the world system.

13:10: Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

The Coming Judgment

Chapter 14 describes the final judgment of Christ when he appears and brings his people with him.

14:13: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

God's People are Victorious

In 15:1-4, as the scene changes, we get a glimpse of heaven again, and God's people are seen as having conquered the State and its persecutory forces.

Visions of the End

Chapters	Vision	Intent for the readers	Culmination
7-II	Opening the Seals, the Seven Trumpets	Judgment will come on the world; believers must endure	Christ reigns over the world; the elders sing proclaiming his victory
12-15:4	Battle in Heaven and on Earth	Persecution will come as Satan tries to thwart God's victory; believers must endure	Christ returns to the perfect city of God with his people and avenges their blood; the saints sing proclaiming his victory

DISCUSSION

Q: How does Satan use powers (especially the State) to force believers into conflict? How should this effect our relationship to our country, our view of power, and the obligation we have to “seek the good of the city” (Jeremiah 29:7)?

Q: Why is it important to remember that Satan has already been defeated (12:10-11)? How does that change how we think about the persecution he sends our way or his power in general?

Q: Revelation makes it clear that we will experience tribulation, hardship, and persecution as Jesus' followers. What hope does it give us in the midst of this reality, and how might that hope help you when tribulation comes your way?