

Dealing With The Devil – Revelation 12:7-11

I. INTRODUCTION

How are we to understand this? That is, **when** does this take place?

In Job 1, the devil appeared before God in heaven.

He said he'd been walking around on the Earth & now stood before the Holy One to present a challenge.

So **After** his revolt against God & loss of position as the chief cherub, the devil had access to heaven.

Here we read a time is coming when Satan will no longer have that access.

He'll get a big ole "ACCESS DENIED" when he swipes his ID to get in.

He & all his demons will be locked out.

As God prepares to bring His Kingdom & rule to Earth, He first purges heaven.

Step One Boot satan out of heaven

Step Two Evict him from Earth.

The noose tightens round the devil's neck.

Note God's agent in dealing w/the devil.

The archangel Michael & some angelic companions; **Angel Team Six**.

Let's play a little game.

You old-timer CCers; remember there's a lot of new folk here who've never done this.

The opposite of Up is? In? Black? Light? Good? God?

God **has NO** opposite. The devil is certainly **not** the opposite of God.

That's his desire; To be **like** the Most High.

If he were God's opposite, he'd be like Him.

But satan isn't & never will be like God because Satan is a **created being**.

The closest opposite to satan is Michael.

In Dan 12:1 we read this –

At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; & there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. & at that time your people shall be delivered.

Folks, vs1&8 are **the** mid-point of the Trib.

This is the beginning of the final 3½ yrs.

v. 9

The dragon is here clearly identified as none other than the devil, the serpent who slithered around in the Garden of Eden & suggested to Eve an alternative to God's good will.

He is also called, "the devil & satan."

The word "devil" comes from the Greek word *diabolos* & means slanderer, accuser; one who defames.

In v. 10 we see that this is precisely what he does.

The word "satan" means *adversary*.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, & strength, & the kingdom of our God, & the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day & night, has been cast down. ¹¹And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb & by the word of their testimony, & they did not love their lives to the death.

This loud voice has to be from the redeemed because it refers to Satan as the accuser of "our brethren."

That's a title reserved in scripture for those of the household of faith.

Of course, it's not hard to imagine the joy that will fill heaven w/the devil's been finally booted from there for good.

If you've every had a really nasty & oppressive houseguest, you know how good it is when they finally leave.

Such will be the rejoicing of heaven when the devil is finally banished.

Of course, the hosts of heaven see this exile of the devil as the *first phase* of confining him altogether & the prospect of that is just too good.

Regarding this identification of the devil as our accuser & how we overcome him, that will be my text for Sunday,

so I will leave more comment till then.

The Bible refers to 4 different falls for Satan.

- From his role as anointed cherub to the adversary (Ezekiel 28:14-16)
- From having access to heaven to restriction to the earth (Here)
- From the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20)

From the bottomless pit to the lake of fire in the final judgment (Revelation 20)

A. A Time For War

1. In Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon spoke of the seasons of life
 - 1 To everything *there is* a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:
 - 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; A time of war, and a time of peace.
2. Pastor Peter Muhlenberg gave perhaps the most dramatic sermon of the Revolutionary era based on this text.
3. Muhlenberg had preached regularly for the cause of the American colonists.
4. In his last sermon before leaving to join Washington's army, he felt it necessary to drive home his point about the need to be doers, and not merely hearers of the Word of God.
5. So, after reading from Ecclesiastes 3, he said,
 - a. "There is a time to preach and a time to pray, but there is also a time to fight, and that time has now come."
 - b. Muhlenberg then threw off his clerical robe to reveal the uniform of a militia colonel.
 - c. he then recruited the men of his congregation, who became known as the "German Regiment," which Muhlenberg commanded throughout the war.

B. We Are At War!

1. There's a war going on in our world today.
 - a. I'm not speaking about one of the conflicts in the *Middle East*
 - 1) the Palestinians and the Israelis
 - 2) Iran & Iraq
 - 3) Syria & Lebanon
 - b. I'm not talking about one of the many conflicts that seem to brew continually in Africa or Asia
2. I'm talking about the age-old conflict that takes place in the spiritual realm between the Kingdom of God and the rebellious kingdom of Satan.
3. The devil managed to enlist humanity in his assault on God way back in the Garden of Eden.
4. But God has made a way for rebel man to forsake his hostility and be reconciled to God.
5. This reconciliation comes through the Cross of Jesus Christ.
 - a. we who are at enmity with God can make peace with Him through faith in His Son!
 - b. but to forsake our rebellion and to lay down our weapons called sin, and come to peace with God means to then find ourselves at odds with our former commander, the devil.
6. While the lost are the enemies of God, the saved are the mortal and hated enemies of Satan.
7. And he has pledged himself to oppose them at every step.

C. Unaware

1. The problem is, in this day when we enjoy such extensive physical prosperity and peace, it's difficult for many Christians to realize there **IS** a spiritual war on.
2. If we lived in Sudan or Pakistan, we'd have daily if not hourly reminders of the reality of spiritual battle.
3. But living in 21st Century America, many believers don't take the reality of the spiritual war seriously.
4. And as a result, they're unprepared when the devil comes into their personal lives with a *flood of temptation*,
 - a. or attacks a loved one with some *massive tactic of discouragement*
 - b. or infiltrates their church and *wrecks havoc through gossip and scandal*.
5. They're like the little girl whose daddy asked her what her favorite Sunday School song was. She replied, "Joshua fought the battle of *Cherry Coke*."
 - a. they have little awareness of what the Bible teaches about spiritual warfare
 - b. they don't take seriously the fact that as a Christian, **THEY ARE AT WAR!**
 - c. and in this war, everything is at stake!
 - d. they can't choose to be pacifists; they can't opt out, becoming conscientious objectors
 - e. if they do that, they're simply painting a big bulls eye on themselves and inviting attack.
6. We need to realize the in terms of spiritual warfare – the best defense is a determined offense.
7. Martin Niemoller was one of the few pastors in Germany during Hitler's rise to power who refused to buy in to Hitler's propaganda.
 - a. he steadfastly resisted the evils of Third Reich with the Power of God's Word.
 - b. Niemoller said, "The gospel is not *defense*, but rather *attack*, and it is up to the world to decide its position! The gospel is glad tidings; and we will not allow the gladness it gives to be taken from us!"
8. Friends, we have an adversary who would love nothing more than to steal from us what God has given.
 - a. if he cannot get us to turn our backs on and forsake the Lord,
 - b. then he will seek to make us *ineffective* as a soldier in God's army.
 - c. he'll try to sap our strength;
 - d. he'll attempt to confuse us or make us so *busy* we have no time to go on the offensive against him.
 - e. he'll try to fill our lives with *mere religious duty* and so steal our *joy*, which **IS** our spiritual strength.
9. Today we'll see how we can resist and overcome our spiritual adversary.

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 7-10

⁷And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

1. John is being given background and supporting visions in this chapter.
 - a. as he has been seeing things that will take place in the very last of the last days --
 - b. God sets the context for those visions by giving him an understanding of the age-old conflict between good and evil, between the Kingdom of God and the rebellious kingdom of satan.
2. What John sees here is a vision of a yet future time when the devil and the demons are finally locked out of heaven.
3. You see, while Lucifer has fallen from his *position* as the chief cherub and leader of worship in heaven, as we read in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, he's still allowed *access* to heaven.
4. We see this in Job 1 where satan appears before God's throne, laying harsh accusations against righteous Job.
5. So, though the devil has lost his heavenly position of favor as a *cherub*, he's still granted *access* to heaven.
6. What's he do there? Look at v. 10 -

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.
7. That's what the devil does in heaven – just like he did with Job, he accuses us before God.
8. The Greek word "accuse" that's used here was a rather ancient word even in John's time.
 - a. it's a compound word which means to be "*against the assembly*."
 - b. it was a legal term which referred to someone who brought a charge against a citizen.
 - c. the charge was serious enough to warrant that person's exclusion from the assembly, *if true!*
 - d. in fact, it was really a charge of treason – a claim the person accused was a traitor.
9. That's what the devil does; he comes before God and claims we have no right to enjoy the blessings of salvation
 - a. he accuses us of being traitors,
 - b. of committing treason and being worthy of nothing other than the *wrath* of God.
10. And notice how often he accuses us of this – day & night!
 - a. he's unrelenting in his assault on us; he ever complains to God of our failure.
 - 1) "How can you love and bless them?" he asks.
 - 2) "Look at them! They're nothing but a pack of useless dustballs."
 - 3) "You're worthy of their complete trust and they can't even believe in you for their daily bread."
 - 4) "They disobey You without let-up. If they aren't breaking one of Your laws in what they are DOING, then they're breaking one of them in what they're NOT doing!"
 - 5) "They fail almost as much as they breath, and their sins are as numerous as each heartbeat."
 - 6) "And the whole time, they THINK they're doing well and pleasing You because they call themselves Christians and go to church."
 - 7) "You really ought to wipe them out. Yeah, show Your true holiness and wipe every last single one of them off the face of the Earth. That'll teach 'em!"
 - b. if you think that sounds far-fetched, then I suggest you read Job 1 and see how the devil accused Job.

11. What John sees in vs. 7-10 is a vision of that future time when God finally says to the devil, “Okay, that’s enough of your accusations and attempt to turn me against my people. You want to see an expression of My holiness at ridding the place of evil? How about this?”

- a. then he turns to Michael and says – “Sic ‘em.”
- b. and Michael, leading the hosts of heaven, goes to war against the devil and his demons and ousts them from heaven altogether.
- c. no longer does the devil come before God and lay accusations against His redeemed.
- d. his charges are no longer heard in heaven’s halls.

12. And at this, the Redeemed in heaven break out in wild praise and shouts of acclamation that God has purged heaven of the presence of evil.

- a. they know *this* is *Phase One* of God purging **ALL** creation of evil.
- b. first He boots the devil out of heaven, and shortly after that in *Phase Two*, He boots the devil out of earth and confines him in the bottomless pit for a 1000 years.

13. In v. 11, the Redeemed of heaven proclaim *how* they have responded to the devil’s accusations for all those years prior to his banishment –

B. V. 11

¹¹And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

1. Don’t forget that what John sees in vs. 7-10 is yet future for us.
2. That means the devil is at present doing what we find in v. 10 – accusing us before God!
3. His work of accusing only ends when he’s finally banished at the mid-point of the Tribulation.
4. But today, we have and *need* an Intercessor and Advocate who can answer the charges the devil lays against us.
 - a. 1 John 2:1 tells us that we have an Advocate in the Person of Jesus Christ -
 - b. while Hebrews 7:25 says that Jesus is *unceasing* in His intercession before God for us.
 - c. so while the devil accuses us day & night, Jesus sits at the right hand of God and gives an unending answer to the charges.
5. The picture is like that of an intense courtroom battle.
 - a. God the Father is the Judge who sits upon His throne
 - b. you and I are the defendant
 - c. the devil is the prosecutor while Jesus is our defense attorney.
6. Here’s how the drama plays out –
 - a. the devil lays out the charge and brings forth the evidence
 - b. Jesus leans over and tells us when we’re asked by the Judge how we plead, we’re to agree with the charge and plead “Guilty,” - Which we do!
 - c. the devil rubs his hands with glee as he suggests a suitable punishment, the one demanded by the Law of God.
 - d. but that’s when our defense attorney rises to His feet and speaks to the Judge.
 - e. He says, “Father, the punishment Lance deserves for his sin I have already paid and I remind You of the arrangement You and I have already made; -
 - f. “That You would give *to Me* all those who would put their faith in Me.”
 - g. the Judge says, “That’s right. The price has been paid for this one’s sin.”

- h. and He bangs His heavenly gavel as He says, "Case closed."
- 7. That's what it means when it says we overcome the accuser by the Blood of the Lamb.
 - a. his accusations carry no weight against us because Jesus has already paid the penalty our sins deserve.
 - b. the fact is, our sins may be even *worse* than satan's accusations make out, for as Jeremiah says, our hearts are wicked and deceitful even beyond our awareness
 - c. yet we are still made righteous by the work of Jesus on the cross
 - 1) Ephesians 1:7 & Colossians 1:14 say that we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and find forgiveness for our sins
 - 2) Hebrews 9:14 says that the blood of Christ is like spiritual cleanser that washes the stain of guilt from our conscience.
 - 3) Roman 8:1 – "There is therefore now no condemnation . . .
- 8. Now, we must not think of the *blood of Christ* in a superstitious or magical way.
 - a. when the Bible speaks of the blood of Christ, it's not referring to the literal, physical blood as though it was some kind of *potion*.
 - b. the blood speaks of the death of Christ.
 - c. it's His death that saves us, for He died FOR US!
 - d. and that's why here in v. 11, we read that the redeemed overcome the devil, by the blood OF THE LAMB.
 - 1) those last three words reminds us that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World. (My sin!)
 - 2) that's the arrangement the Father and Son made before the dawn of Creation --
 - 3) that Jesus would die, not for Himself, but for others – He is our *substitute*!
 - 4) He took our place on the Cross and died to pay the penalty for our sins.
 - 5) in the Cross, where His blood was shed, the just demands of the Law of God were fully satisfied.
- 9. I want to return to that courtroom scene we visited a moment ago.
 - a. the prosecutor has laid out the charges
 - b. and our defense attorney has spoken to the Judge
 - c. the gavel has fallen and the case is dismissed
 - d. we are legally free; but there's a problem--the devil's accusations are still ringing in *our* ears.
 - 1) we step down from the box in a daze
 - 2) and the devil sees we're shaken
 - 3) when we ought to be rejoicing in our pardon and going out to celebrate the good news
 - 4) we are instead struck by gravity of our failure and sin
 - 5) so, he comes quickly to *our side* and says, "Yes! You are a wretch! You always will be."
 - 6) "And because you always will be, God will never be able to use you."
 - 7) "In fact, why even try to change – you know you're just going to blow it."
 - 8) "You're a loser! A sinner – and hey, what do sinners do? They sin!"
 - 9) "So go ahead."
 - e. now, if we listen to this pack of lies and give in, then he comes again and says, "See!

You really are a wretch!”

- f. interesting isn't it: The devil tempts us and makes sin look appealing – but when we finally give in and succumb, then He beats us over the head with guilt and uses it as a club to destroy our spiritual effectiveness for God.
 - g. he first entices us to sin, then accuses us once we do.
 - h. this is like me telling you not to eat a *Krispy Kreme* donut, then waving a nice warm one in front of your eyes and nose and then putting it in your hand; and after you've taken a bite, berating you for being so weak and telling you how bad you are for eating.
10. God has forgiven us in Jesus Christ; the accusations of our guilt carry no weight with God.
11. But all too often, *they do with us!*
- a. we listen to the accusations of the accuser of the brethren and are despoiled by them
 - b. we invest more attention in the *accusations* than in what *God* says about them –
 - c. and what does He say? “FORGIVEN!”
 - d. as I said before, if the devil cannot stop you from being saved, then he will move to making you *ineffective*.
 - e. and one of the primary ways he does this is by getting you to focus on *your failure* rather than God's grace.
12. Here's how we can overcome the accuser – *by the blood of Christ*.
- a. what did you do to earn forgiveness? Nothing!
 - b. it's not what we do, but what Jesus DID that secures our salvation.
 - c. when the accuser comes to remind you of your failure – don't argue with him; agree!
 - d. in and of yourself, you *are* a failure.
 - e. but it's not about you – it's about Jesus!
 - f. in fact, it's your failure that *qualifies* you for what Jesus did!
 - g. and just as it's not about what you do but what about Jesus did, in the same way, as you *live* the Christian life, it's not about what you do, but what God does in & through you!
13. That's where the next part of v. 11 comes in . . .
- They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony,
14. Our testimony is that we are saved by the Grace of God, *not by our works*.
15. We overcome the accuser by not falling into his trap of battling him in our own strength or merit.
- a. when he comes and points the finger at us,
 - b. we simply remind him that it's not about us – it's about Jesus!
 - c. Gal. 2:20
16. Have you ever given your testimony?
- a. I've heard lots of them
 - b. I've heard some that went on for hours
 - c. each month and Men's Fellowship one of the brothers gives their testimony – 15 minutes
 - d. here's mine – start your timers!
 - 1) I was a lost, blind, wretched sinner with a desperately wicked heart.
 - 2) even the good I did, I did for ultimately selfish reasons
 - 3) but God, in His infinite mercy and grace, opened my eyes and softened my hard heart

and saved me!

4) it's not by works of righteousness which I have done, but according to His mercy that I am saved. (20 seconds?)

17. Our testimony is the truth that God saved us by His grace, apart from what we have done.

18. We can overcome the accuser by staying focused on *God's grace* and not giving in to his attempt to discourage us with *self-criticism*.

19. Remember, what the devil wants to do is make you ineffective as a Christian.

a. if he can get you to be focused on yourself, he's succeeded!

b. therefore, maintain your testimony – that it's all about God's Grace!

20. And here's the amazing thing – it's God's *grace* that will make you effective!

a. not a degree in theology or 6 years of the proper religious training.

b. one of the subtle ways the devil camouflages his accusations to keep you ineffective is by telling you the only way God can use you is when you are “–er”

1) do you know what I mean?

2) when you study harder, pray longer, do better --

3) then and only then can God use you.

c. but that's not the case; in fact if we buy into that kind of thinking we really *disqualify* ourselves from effectiveness because we will think that we've *earned* the blessing of God, and that's the very opposite of grace.

21. You & I ought to come to God and simply say, “God, not because I deserve it, but because of who and what YOU ARE – bless me.”

a. at the same time the devil is there standing before the throne accusing us, we can also come and while he's still yapping, just smile and say, “God blow the devil's mind and pour out Your unrestrained goodness onto me!”

b. “He's saying I should be punished, and I won't argue. Left to myself, I should be.”

c. “But I don't stand before you clothed in my works, I come clothed in the righteousness of Your Son who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

d. “Now, let the devil, the demons, the holy angels, and all the world see what it means to live in, by, and through Your grace and favor.”

e. “Bless me so abundantly that it just makes people scratch their heads and say, “This HAS TO BE GOD because there is NO OTHER explanation!”

22. My basis for this is Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

23. I think of the story in Isaiah 7 –

a. the prophet told wicked King Ahaz to ask for a sign that God would protect the nation from an attack.

b. but Ahaz replied, “I will not ask, nor will I tempt the Lord.”

c. this sounds like a pious answer but the fact is, Ahaz didn't *want* to trust the Lord

d. he'd already devised a plan to ally himself with another nation.

e. so Isaiah said *this* to the king – “Is it a small thing that you weary the Lord?”

f. note that – it wasn't *asking* the Lord for blessing that wearied God; it was *FAILING* to ask for blessing that wearied Him!

24. If we only understood had passionately **God wants to bless us!**

- a. if we could only see how He *waits* for us to come to Him with our needs and lives
 - b. His well of grace is limitless, but we seem to rarely lower our bucket
 - c. what wearies God is that we neglect Him and His grace and seek to do it on our own
25. In Matthew 7 Jesus said, “*Keep on asking* and you will receive. *Keep on seeking* and you will find. *Keep on knocking* and it shall be opened.”
26. The word of our testimony is the message of God’s amazing grace – apart from our merit.
27. Now – I know what some are thinking – Does this mean holiness and obedience don’t matter?

- a. if God’s grace comes apart from what we do, does it not matter what we do?
- b. the answer to that is found in the last part of v. 11

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

28. The word “love” here is that unique word “agape.”

- a. it refers to the highest kind of love – the *selfless* love
- b. when John says “they did not love their lives to the death” he means they didn’t put their earthly lives as the end all and be all of their existence.
- c. there was something MORE IMPORTANT to them than mere survival.
- d. their highest love was reserved for God!
- e. and there is your answer to the question of holiness and obedience.
- f. those who genuinely love God will *desire* holiness and be obedient;
 - 1) not out of a sense of religious duty
 - 2) nor out of the belief that such holiness will make them more effective
 - 3) they will pursue holiness because they know God *desires* it, and their love for Him will compel them to *please* Him,
 - 4) just as the young man in love does that which pleases the object of his affection.

29. It’s upon those who love God first and foremost that He answers the prayer of blessing.

- a. those who love God above *even their own lives* know His blessing does not come to satisfy some selfish thing,
- b. but as a means to **BE** a blessing to others.
- c. even if it is some personal blessing God bestows on them, they will glorify and magnify His name in their testimony to His goodness.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Effective In the Fight

- 1. Satan’s strategy in spiritual warfare is to try to take you out of the fight.
- 2. If he can’t get you to compromise with the world, then he’ll try to make you ineffective by getting you to focus on your weaknesses and inadequacies.
- 3. You can overcome him, not by backing into some defensive position, but by going on the offensive.
- 4. There was a report in the *Denver Post* some time back about a new tactic sheep ranchers in Colorado were using to combat the problem with coyotes.
 - a. every year, ranchers lose hundreds of lambs to the critters and though they had tried many different weapons in their war with coyotes, nothing worked.
 - b. that was until Lexy Lowler imported some llamas.
 - c. Lowler had heard that llamas are by nature not afraid of anything but rather are

curious and when they see something of interest, will boldly walk right up to it to check it out.

d. so she imported some and put them with her flocks of sheep.

e. whenever a coyote would approach, the llamas would put their heads up and walk straight at it.

f. well, that's aggressive behavior as far as the coyote is concerned and they want nothing to do with it, so they take off.

5. James 4:7 says – “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

6. The moment we sense his attack is the moment we should face it and deal with it.

7. When he accuses us and tempts us to become self-focused and absorbed in our inadequacies, we agree with him that in and of ourselves, we *are* disqualified.

8. But our faith in Christ lifts us out of ourselves and places us in Christ who died for us and paid the penalty for our sin.

9. All that is left is one upon whom God is pleased to demonstrate Himself by showering His grace.

B. One Another

1. There's another very important application for the truth we've seen today.

2. It has to do with what we do, not with the accusations the devil makes about us to ourselves, but about others.

3. Friends, if God forgives in Christ, then who are we to hold on to offenses?

4. Do we not take the role of the devil when we accuse and condemn one another?

5. God is ready, willing, and eager to forgive – He but waits upon our repentance.

a. and that is precisely the posture we ought to have toward one another --

b. ready, willing, and eager to forgive.

6. There is utterly no room for gossip, slander, accusation, libel, and a chronic attitude of criticism in the Body of Christ.

7. Oh how it grieves the Spirit of God when His children go to war with one another.

8. Do we not see we play straight into the enemy's hands when we criticize and accuse one another.

9. We owe one another the deepest commitment of loyalty and love

a. we ought to be on the lookout for one another –

b. not to find fault, but rather to protect one another's reputation.

10. God is the Only Judge; Let's leave judgment to Him and instead re-commit ourselves to loving and serving one another!