

A. **The Unseen Enemy** (Revelation 12:1-17)

1. **Satan Attempts to Prevent Christ's Coming** (12:1-6)

“¹ A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ² She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. ³ Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. ⁴ Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. ⁵ She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. ⁶ The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God...”

- The Woman symbolizes the Church in both dispensations (Revelation 21:12-14)
- The Child is Christ – the promised seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15)
- The dragon is Satan, who dragged a number of evil spirits with him in his rebellion and ruin.
- In one sentence is described Christ's resurrection, ascension and enthronement. (William Hendriksen, Commentary on Revelation)
- Satan tried to prevent the coming of Christ (Messiah).
In what ways did Satan try to prevent Christ's coming?
(Briefly discuss Pharaoh, Athaliah, Esther, Herod)

2. **Satan is Cast Down** (12:7-9)

“⁷ Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

- Satan has lost his place as the accuser of believers (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Zechariah 3:1-5).
- Christ's atonement has been fully accomplished; complete satisfaction for sin was rendered at His ascension (Romans 8:33).
(Dennis Johnson, Commentary on Revelation)

3. **Satan is Filled with Fury Because his Time is Short** (12:10-12)

“¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ¹¹ They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury because he knows that his time is short.”

- Christ has conquered! Satan has been defeated,
- The devil’s anger is sparked above all by his knowledge that “he has a little time” to work his destruction on earth. He has only a little time before his final and eternal defeat. (G.K. Beale, Commentary on Revelation)

4. **Satan Persecutes the Church** (12:15-17)

“¹⁵ Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.”

- The Church is protected from Satan’s most direct and deadly attack. He cannot destroy the Church (the millennium of Revelation 20).
- He tries to engulf the Church in a stream (metaphor) of lies, delusions, religious ‘isms’, philosophical falsehoods, political utopias, quasi-scientific dogmas, but the true Church is not fooled. (William Hendriksen)
- The image of the flood proceeding from the serpent’s mouth portrays his attempt to destroy the church by deception and false teaching... satanic agents – false teachers, compromisers, and demons – infiltrate the church to deceive her and contribute to her demise (G.K. Beale).
- Satan tried to prevent Christ’s first coming. He failed. He knows his time is short. How might he try and work against God and prevent Christ’s Second Coming?

B. God is on the Throne (Revelation Chapters 4 – 7)

1. The Throne (4: 2,10-11)

² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it... ¹⁰ They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ¹¹ “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

- The throne represents God’s sovereignty. The purpose of this vision is to show us, in beautiful symbolism, that all things are governed by the Lord on the throne. “All things” must include our trials and tribulations. That is why the description of the throne precedes the symbolic prediction of the trials and tribulations which the Church must experience here on earth... (William Hendriksen).

2. The Lamb and the Scroll (5:1-7, 9)

¹ Then I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” ⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders... He went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne... ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

- The scroll represents God’s eternal plan. The closed scroll indicates the plan of God unrevealed and unexecuted. If that scroll remains sealed, God’s purposes are not realized; His plan is not carried out.
- To open the scroll by breaking the seals means not merely to reveal but to carry out God’s plan. When the scroll is opened and the seals are broken, then the universe is governed in the interest of the church. Then, God’s glorious redemptive purpose is being realized; His plan is being carried out and the contents of the scroll will come to pass in the history of the universe. But if the scroll is not opened, it means that there will be no protection for God’s children in the hours of bitter trial; no judgements upon a persecuting world; no ultimate triumph for believers; no new heaven and earth; no future inheritance. (William Hendriksen)

3. **The Seals and the Four Horses** (6:1-9)

“¹ I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!”² I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.³ When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!”⁴ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.⁵ When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand.⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “Two pounds of wheat for a day’s wages, and six pounds of barley for a day’s wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!”⁷ When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!”⁸ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth...”

- The seals, trumpets, bowls of wrath and similar symbols refer not to specific events, particular happenings, or details of history, but to principles – of human conduct and of divine moral government – that are operating throughout the history of the world, especially throughout the present dispensation (last days).
- The four horsemen represent the first 4 seals: conquest, war, famine and death. These calamities characterize an indefinite period before the second coming. Throughout this age (the last days), the horsemen ride. They are symbolical of the conditions and woes of this time (Matthew 24). Christ is sovereign over these woes.
- True, it is the wicked world that is persecuting the Church. But that world, in turn, is but an instrument in the hand of the One who has taken the scroll. So Satan is foiled by his own weapons; that which was intended as a means of extermination becomes a means of strengthening the Church, an instrument for the furtherance of the kingdom of God and the salvation of His people. (William Hendriksen)

4. **The Last Judgement** (6: 12-17)

¹² I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³ and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴ The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

- Here is judgment day under the symbolism of a crashing universe and a thoroughly frightened human race... the entire godless world is seized with fear. They are fleeing from something far more terrible than crumbling mountains and falling rocks. They even seek safety in death itself, if only death would come to them. The door of grace is closed for ever once that day has arrived!
(William Hendriksen)

5. **The Church Militant on Earth** (7:1-4)

¹ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³ “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” ⁴ Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.”

- The sealing is the most precious thing under heaven... The emphasis is on ownership and consequent protection... The number is 144,000. This of course is symbolical and symbolizes the entire church militant of the old and new dispositions. (William Hendriksen)

6. **The Multitude in Heaven** (7:9-10, 17)

⁹ After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” ¹⁷ For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

- This is the Church triumphant in eternity which shall dwell forever in the immediate presence of God and His throne.