

The Revelation to St. John

Collect Prayer -

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever.

Amen

Are there questions or comments from the last session? For those of you following online you may email Fr. Bart at frryanssc@frontiernet.net

Revelation 12:1-6

And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; 2she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. 3And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads 4His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; 5she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, 6and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Continuing our discussion of this passage:

I. Revelation 12 is based on Two sources

A. Individual portions are found in many sources in the O.T.

B. The first close parallel is the birth of Apollo

Leto becomes pregnant by Zeus. The dragon python foresaw that this child, a son, would replace him as the ruler over the oracle at Delphi. He

sought to kill the child at birth. Zeus commissioned the North wind and the sea god Poseidon to aid Leto, She gave birth to Artemis: Apollo slew the dragon Python

Why did John use this account?

Dragon - Python - the devil

Role at Delphi is to be the intermediary between the gods and man - Jesus is our only mediator and advocate

C. The Second Source - The woman is Israel

*1. Numerous references to the woman giving birth (Gen 3:16)
Micah 4:10 these birth pangs are the representation of the
giving birth to the Messiah is the prophet Micah*

2. We see the mix of the Genesis account of the serpent and the woman

II. The great red dragon

A. John links the serpent in Genesis to the dragon

B. The snake also becomes the devil in the book of Wisdom 2:24

C. The power of the dragon recalls Daniel 8:10 where the stars are told as representations of the pagan powers

II. The dragon seeks to kill the male child - The Messiah

A. Psalm two "You are my son today I have begotten you"

B. The power of the Cross:

By birth John does not mean the Nativity but the enthronement of Jesus, but the moment of His death on the Cross. It is then that He is enthroned, resumes His place, defeats satan for all time and thus begin the Age of the Messiah

Note: John's Gospel does not begin with either the birth or the temptations by satan. Rather, satan works before the crucifixion by enticing Judas into betraying Jesus John 13:2, 27 and Luke 22:3

Note Jesus Words: John 14:30 " I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, but I do as the Father commanded me so that the world may know that I love the Father.

Luke also shares John's understanding. At the end of the account of the temptations of Jesus Luke adds this information, "And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time" Luke 4:13

**** C. The refuge of the desert

1. God cares for her 1,260 days - again we have the 42 months
 2. John want to remind us of the Exodus and God care in the time and the eventual outcome - the promised land.
- that

III. The Good News

A. The Church - the bride of Christ - Is pregnant with the Messiah

B. The devil has evil designs for the Church in this and every age, but Jesus has promised that "The gates of Hades will not prevail against the church" Matthew 16:18

C. We share that assurance and we can also be sure that the Church will be under assault - it is the very assault of the church that confirms to us the correctness of our direction and the protection of God under which we live now and into eternal life.

7-12

7Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their

testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ¹²Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

I. The fall of the dragon is dramatized

A. What do we mean by dramatized? A representation of Christ ultimate Victory - on the Cross

1. Not a story - not fiction
2. Christ (God) is self sacrifice
3. The contrast is to evil which is greed and personal desire

B. Everything John sees in Heaven has an earthly connection - thus when Michael throws down satan - Jesus dies on the Cross

C. This connection is something we should reflect upon for the effectiveness of our sacramental life.

1. Why can our sins be forgiven through the sacrament of penance? -

Jesus Sacrifice destroyed the effect of sins for those who accept Him and His Sacrifice in Heaven - Eternal consequences and temporal punishments

2. Why can we receive Holy Communion and do we repeat the death of Jesus on the cross when we remember?

The Sacrificed Lamb of God is ever present so that we can enter into the Sacrifice with our sacrifice and receive the effects through our worship entering into the Divine Liturgy - Holy Eucharist

II. This dramatic presentation should not be understood as an explanation for the origin of satan - or the legendary mythic tale of the fallen angels

Then what is it about?

A. The defeat of evil by Jesus

1. Luke 10:18 Jesus declares: *"I saw satan fall like lightning from heaven"*

- role in
- a. Not I will see but I saw!
 - b. We are to understand that satan role as prosecutors the heavenly court - Job: 1:6-12, 2:1-7
 - c. For those who suggest that Job itself is a representation not a factual book

Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

John 12:31

Jesus is clearly teaching that by His death evil has been defeated, its effects are diminished, and evils time is short, for the Kingdom has come. I would ask you to recall our overall understanding of this book - The battle of good and evil with God's Victory to be celebrated.

2. Practically we look around and see evil in the world today - how has the battle been won if evil still exists in this world?

- a. The Heavenly Liturgy instructs us - the accused, out brothers and sisters, conquer by the Blood of the Lamb - nothing can harm them - they walk like Jesus - remember the passage from John 14:30 , *for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, but I do as the Father commanded*

- b. Conquest over evil never is a designation for vindictive action against the enemy; rather we are faithful unto death. Like Jesus who was silent before His persecutors so to are we to be - this is the Victory

III. The Good News

- A. "War broke out in Heaven" we are to understand that our life is to be at war with evil?

- B. The "Just War" theory is but one misinterpretation of God Will for His people.

- C. We need not spend our days at war - rather we have no need to be vindictive - God has already won the victory

- D. Our role is one of resistance - and it is no even with our power or ability that we are to resist evil, rather is it by accepting God's Grace that we are to live at peace, resisting evil and loving, God and His People

12:12-18

¹³And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. ¹⁵The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. ¹⁶But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth. ¹⁷Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

I. The Woman - The Church

A. Protected by God - while they fulfil their role (The issue of time)

B. The two great eagle wings recall the Exodus - another time when God's People were protected and cared for - eagles symbolize speed, effectiveness

C. What is the flood of water about?

The flood of water is the flood of evil, the Great flood is remembered, the parting of the Red Sea, The Waters of Baptism

II. The Church is beyond the reach of this flood of evil, but the faithful on earth may die because of it. Only the first death and not the second

A. This relates to both the timeless nature of the message and the human understanding of Church

Militant, Expectant and Triumphant - only the people of the church militant are within the reach of evil - Consider what casting out evil from heaven does to the power and reach of evil? Can evil touch those in the nearer presence of God? No, because evil is overcome by the Good the true and the beautiful - the sacrifice of the Cross - Evil can not exist where light and truth exist

B. The dragon is attempting to battle against the offspring of the woman - not just the Christ but all those born of Holy Mother Church

III. The Good news is that the Church Catholic (Universal) will survive

The universal church the Church of God that is beyond, above and eternal. Local churches have and do fail, people leave them, and their preaching is unsound. All of the churches of Revelation have long since ended their ministry, but the Church Survives - and so will we. Our earthy role will end, our time will pass by, but we will endure as the church endures

Revelation 13

¹And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads. ²And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder. ⁴Men worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

⁵And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months; ⁶it opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, ⁸and all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. ⁹If any one has an ear, let him hear: ¹⁰ If any one is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if any one slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

I. The Beasts

A. The four beast in Daniel 7:2-8 are now used to represent the world empires

B. IV Ezra also gives us a close parallel - a seas rising from the sea, the abyss

C. We also recall the great sea monster of Genesis 1:21 (Leviathan) and Ps. 104:26

II. IV Ezra has already revealed Daniel's fourth beast to be Rome

A. Satan (Evil) already cast from heaven is still ruler of the world

B. To the beast evil gives a throne, power and authority

To understand this passage we need to recall the temptation of Jesus. Remember that satan (evil) offers to Jesus earthly power and prestige. This is all that evil can offer. Not real power, or eternal glory, but power in the here and now. We see evil everyday seem to triumph, but is it real triumph?

Evil gives to some power so that they can wage war against the People of God - those who seek the Good, the True and the Beautiful - who live in the light and not darkness.

C. The beast becomes a parody of the Lamb - the great deceiver again - mortally wounded he lives -

D. Evil is then more sinister than the agents he uses, the beasts (Nero)

The evil in Nero is the emperor worship which moves people from worship of the true and living God.

II. The beast is the earthly instrument of warfare against the children of the Woman (The Church)

A. The worshippers are the inhabitants of the world who do not know God

B. They are to be for us a contrast with the People of God whose names are written in the Book of Life

C. John now admonishes Christians not to take the easy road - get along

Christian will be saved through the tribulation of this world, the sickness, and captivity to evil, torment and death to this world. They will not be protected from it, but they will be saved from the effects of evil in this world.

III. The Good News

A. In our day and every age there have been totalitarian powers that are evil incarnate - In many cases we have seen them dramatically fail and fall apart, but some continue and seem to thrive - Seem to thrive is the issue for us.

Love abides, not hate, indifference to evil

B. There is also the more insidious attacks against God's People which do not come in the guise of violence, but of peace - getting along - This may well be the challenge in our day

C. The Good news is that Church will prevail against every evil and those who persevere to the end will be saved. We know the Truth and the truth has set us free