

Study 25: Revelation 12:10-17

12 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 Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

- There is another example of John hearing a loud voice in heaven. It is hard to miss what heaven is saying. One must actively work to ignore what is said in a loud voice. There were several instances where the Father spoke to Jesus, but those around mistook the voice for something else.

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. (Matthew 17:5-6)

and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22)

Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine (John 12:28-30).

He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone (Acts 9:4-7).

As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." (Hebrews 3:15)

At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." (Hebrews 12:26)

- God can shake the earth and heavens with His voice.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic. The voice of the LORD

breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning. The voice of the LORD shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, "Glory!" (Psalm 29:3-9)

- So, what is God saying to you? Listen carefully; His voice is all around, sometimes in circumstances or through other people, sometimes through His word or His still, small voice.
- What is God shaking in your life? What do you think He is trying to tell you in the midst of that shaking?

13 They overcame 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.

- Satan accuses the people of God before God. There are three things by which we can overcome his accusations. First is the blood of Jesus. I heard someone say once that there is more power in one drop of Jesus' blood than all the power of darkness.
- Second is the word of our testimony. We must always be declaring God's goodness and what He has done for us. Are you giving enough testimony to the grace of God in your life? Are you writing about it and posting it to the web somewhere?
- Third is not to fear death. The worst person to be in a fight with is one who isn't worried about the outcome. That person is trying to win the fight, not trying not to lose. We can fight the evil one without fear, for even if we lose our lives, we will be with Him in the next life. We cannot lose, for even if we lose this life, we have another. That makes us a dangerous people.
- Paul wrote:

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body (Philippians 1:20-24).

- How do you view death? Are you afraid? If so, why? What else are you afraid of? How can the Spirit of God help alleviate your fears? We can only be victorious if we don't count our lives worth too much.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:54-58).

- Don't get me wrong. We should always protect our lives and not be reckless. But we should not try to protect our lives if God puts us in dangerous or precarious situations. At that point, if we cannot flee, we must stand without fear.

14 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."

- Since we are seated in heavenly places with Christ (see Ephesians 2:6), we should rejoice. The devil's power over us has been broken. Those who don't know our God or have the power of the Spirit in their lives are subject to the devil's fury.
- Are you rejoicing? The command to rejoice is throughout the New Testament. Joy is not a feeling, but a decision.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)

15 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

- Because the devil is so angry, he makes war against the Church of God. We are his target. We have discussed spiritual warfare in the previous installment. In Revelation 12:7, however, the war was in heaven. Now it is on the earth.

16 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.

- As stated in 12:6, the Church is protected by God. The Church cannot protect herself without God's divine protection. Jesus prayed for this protection:

I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-- the name

you gave me-- so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one (John 17:9-15).

- He prayed this not only for those who were alive during His earthly ministry, but for all those who would come after them. Therefore, God still protects His Church! That is the message of Revelation. God is victorious and the Church is also, but only through Him.

17 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.

- I'm not sure why, but when I read this verse, I think of Ephesians 5, which states:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word (Ephesians 5:25-26).

- What has this got to do with verse 15? I have studied the many heresies and false interpretations of Jesus and His work that followed His death for the next few centuries. Since the Word is likened to the work of water in Ephesians, I see that the devil tried to overwhelm the Church with false doctrines for hundreds of years. He tried to drown the Church in his own water.
- Remember, the devil proved that he knows the Word well when he tempted Jesus. But his use of the Word was twisted and not quite accurate. When he failed to trap Jesus using the Word, he has tried to deceive the Church using the same techniques.

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen (2 Peter 3:15-18).

- This has been true even of the book of Revelation, which has been used to make men rich as they interpret the events depicted in wild and inaccurate interpretations.
- Our study is through chapter twelve and at no point have we resorted to interpretations of historical or future events. We have rather applied the word of God as revealed in Revelation to our everyday lives.

18 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

- But throughout history God has always raised up a champion who helped bring clarity and accuracy to every doctrinal perversion of the devil. He also empowers you and me to handle the Word accurately, if we so choose.
- In fact, God used every doctrinal “war” in history to help the true Church define the doctrines of the faith accurately for future generations. That is why it is important to walk in the historical or what is called the orthodox teachings of the Church. Remember the warning in Peter’s second epistle:

We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:18-21).

- We are not free to interpret the Word as we see fit, but only as the Spirit intended. The more “Word” we know, the less free we are to interpret it after our own prejudices or needs. The Word is always interpreted by the Word itself or through the Spirit’s illumination.

19 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring-- those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

- The devil’s attacks against the Church have always failed, although they did reap short-term results. This has only enraged him more and he will not stop attacking the Church until the return of the Lord. But we are always victorious in Christ and he will continue to fail. Thanks be to God!