

Jesus Beats Satan



SABBATH—FEBRUARY 16

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 12:1–5; Genesis 3:14, 15; Revelation 12:7–9, 13, 14, 17; 2 Thessalonians 2:8–12.

MEMORY VERSE: “They had victory over him by the blood the Lamb spilled for them. They had victory over him by speaking the truth about Jesus to others [people on the earth]. They were willing to risk [take a chance with] their lives, even if it led to death” (Revelation 12:11, NIV).

REVELATION 12–14 help us understand the last-day events in Revelation. These three chapters show us the full history of the war between God and Satan, from before Jesus' time on earth until His Second Coming. Revelation 1:1–11:19 show us the spiritual battles that the church must fight during Christian history, from John's time until the end time. The rest of Revelation is about different things that happen before the Second Coming. Revelation 12 gives us the “big picture” that is going on behind everything we see during the last days of this earth's history.

In the book of Revelation, Satan is the worst enemy of God and His people. Satan is real. He causes all evil and war on this earth, just as he did when he was in heaven. Satan knows that his last chance to win against God is to win the last war on earth before the Second Coming. That is why Satan puts all his power and time into getting ready for that last fight. Revelation 12 also shows God's end-time church that Satan already lost the war. Jesus beat Satan at the cross. Jesus will beat Satan again in the end time. So, Jesus is the only hope for God's people.



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THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON (Revelation 12:1–5)

In Revelation 12:1–5, John saw in a vision two important signs or symbols. The first symbol is a woman who is about to have a baby. Who is this woman? What do the verses in Revelation 12:1–5 teach us about her?

In the Bible, a woman is a word picture for God's people (2 Corinthians 11:2). A woman who has not done any sex sins is a word picture for loyal believers. A prostitute is a person who sells sex for money. A prostitute is a word picture in the Bible for believers who turn away from God and His truth. The woman in Revelation 12:1–5 is a word picture for Old Testament Israel. But after Jesus' death on the cross, the woman in Revelation 12:13–17 becomes a word picture for the Christian church.

The book of Revelation shows us the woman in clothes as bright as the sun. The moon is under her feet. The sun in the Bible can mean Jesus' holy life and glory (Malachi 4:2; Revelation 1:16) and the glory of His people (Matthew 13:43). The moon shines with the sun's light. In the same way, God's promises in the Old Testament are the same as the moon. They shine with the light of the Good News to come in the New Testament.

The next thing John sees is a big red dragon. Later, John says that the dragon is the devil, or Satan (Revelation 12:9). The Bible says that the dragon used his tail to pull 1/3 of the stars from heaven to earth. The dragon's tail is a word picture for the tricks the devil uses (Isaiah 9:14, 15; Revelation 9:10). After Satan lost his job in heaven (Isaiah 14:12–15), he turned 1/3 of the angels away from God. These angels became evil spirits (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6; 1 Timothy 4:1). They chose to join Satan in his fight against God and His work to save humans.

John tells us that the “dragon is that old snake” (Revelation 12:9, ERV). What connection is there between Genesis 3:15 and the snake who tries to destroy the woman's child in Revelation 12:1–5?

From the start, Satan waited for the promised Savior to be born to destroy Him. But Satan failed. Jesus won.

How do we win against Satan in our lives? We know Jesus won. What hope does that give you while you fight against sin?



A prostitute is a word picture that the Bible uses for believers who turn away from God and His truth.

GOD THROWS SATAN OUT OF HEAVEN (Revelation 12:7–9)

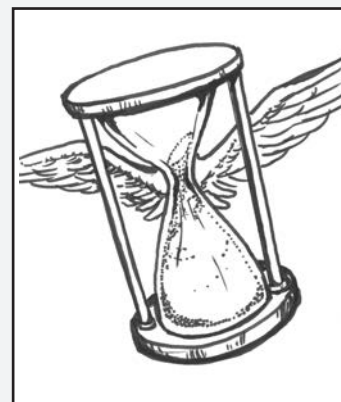
Read Revelation 12:7–9. These verses talk about a war in heaven. At the end of this war, God forced Satan to leave heaven. What caused that war?

Satan fought a war against God’s government. So, God forced Satan to leave heaven. Satan wanted to sit on God’s throne. Satan wanted to be “like [the same as] God Most High” (Isaiah 14:12–15, ERV). But God beat Satan in the war. Then God threw Satan out of heaven to earth. There, Satan tricked Adam and Eve and caused them to sin. By doing that, Satan stole from Adam and Eve their power to rule this earth (Luke 4:6). After God threw Satan out of heaven, God sent Satan and his evil angels to the earth. It is their prison. They must stay here until it is time for God to punish them (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

While God’s people waited for Him to punish Satan, Jesus died for their sins. He made a way for humans to have again everything they lost because of sin. God showed the evil in Satan’s heart to everyone in heaven and on earth. “God pulled away Satan’s mask, his false face that hid his true hate for God. Then angels and people who lived on other planets saw Satan’s true government and leadership. Satan showed everyone he was a killer. He spilled the blood of God’s Son. This evil act caused the hearts of the angels in heaven to turn away from Satan forever. After that, Satan’s work was limited.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 761, adapted. In front of everyone in heaven, God took the control of this earth away from Satan and gave it to Jesus. God told everyone that Jesus was the true king over the earth (Ephesians 1:20–22; Philippians 2:9–11).

After that, God shut Satan and his angels out of heaven forever. Jesus talks about this time when He says, “ ‘Now it is time for the world to be judged. Now the prince of this world [earth] will be thrown out’ ” (John 12:31, NIV). Until Jesus comes back, Satan’s power to hurt God’s people on earth is limited. Satan has only a short time before God punishes him for all his evil (Revelation 12:12). That is why Satan does all that he can in this short time to cause pain, suffering, and trouble on earth.

What does Revelation 12:11 teach us about how we can protect ourselves from the devil?



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THE WAR ON EARTH (Revelation 12:13, 14)

After God refused to let Satan into heaven anymore, Satan continued his attack against God by attacking God's church on earth during the 1,260 days or years (A.D. 538–1798) that the Bible talks about. What do Revelation 12:13, 14 say that God did for His church during that time?

“God threw Satan out of heaven after Jesus gave up His life to save His people. Satan worked very hard to stop God's plans to save humans. But God finished His plans to save us anyway. . . . Satan knows that the kingdom he stole from Adam will be taken away from him in the end. So, Satan does everything he can to destroy all the people until the end of time. Satan hates man because Jesus showed so much love and pity for man. So, Satan planned to use every trick and lie to make man lose his everlasting life. Satan puts all his power and strength in this plan because he knows he does not have any chance to win the war against God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy [special messages from God]*, volume 3, pages 194, 195, adapted.

Yes, Satan works hard to destroy the one thing on this earth that Jesus loves most: the church. But God protects the church in the wild land during the special 1,260 days that the Bible talks about. Satan attacks God's church during these 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6). The 1,260 days is a word picture for 1,260 years. It is the same time in the Bible as the “three-and one-half years” (Revelation 12:14, NLV). Both the 1,260 days and the 3 ½ years show us the time in history when the little-horn power attacked God's true church (Daniel 7:23–25). In the Bible, one day can equal a year in special messages from God about time. The time in history that best matches the 1,260 days or 3 ½ years is A.D. 538 to 1798. During that time, the Roman Catholic Church controlled most of Europe until the French Revolution ended the church's power in 1798.

At the end of the time that the “woman” stays in the wild land, Satan starts a new attack against her. Satan, the dragon, spits a flood of waters out of his mouth to destroy the “woman,” who is God's church. The Bible often uses a flood as a word picture to show us the evil people who want to hurt God's people (Isaiah 59:19). But the earth, a word picture for America, swallows the waters and saves the woman from her attackers (Revelation 12:16).



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WAR AGAINST GOD’S PEOPLE (Revelation 12:17)

Revelation 12:17 talks about the group of people that Satan fights against at the end of time. Who are they?

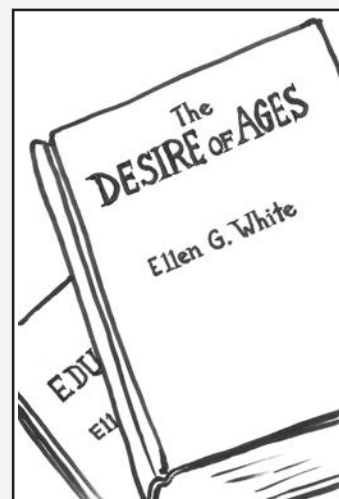
The word “rest” in Revelation 12:17 (NirV) also is written as “all her other children” (ERV). It shows us the people who stay loyal to God and obey Him when no one else does (1 Kings 19:18; Revelation 2:24). At the end of time, most people on the earth will support Satan. But there will be a small group of people on the earth who will stay loyal to Jesus. The people who obey Jesus will feel Satan’s full anger.

What two things does Revelation 12:17 show us about God’s special end-time people? How can we be sure that we belong to God’s special end-time people?

God’s special end-time people keep all of God’s commandments. Revelation 13 shows us that commandments #1–4 will be very important during the war between good and evil at the end time. The commandments #1–4 are about the worship of God. The war between good and evil at the end time is about worship. Almost all the people on earth will choose to worship the wild sea animal and its false sabbath. But God’s special end-time people will worship God who made them (Revelation 14:7). The 4th commandment clearly shows us that God is the One who made us. That is one reason we believe that the 4th commandment will become very important at the end of time.

Also, God’s special end-time people will have “ ‘the truth of [about] Jesus’ ” (Revelation 19:10, ERV). The same verse explains that “ ‘the truth of [about] Jesus is the spirit of prophecy [special messages from God about what will happen in the future]’ ” (ERV). The words “ ‘the truth of [about] Jesus’ ” show us that Jesus uses the gift of prophecy to witness to His people. That is the same thing that Jesus did with John (Revelation 1:2). The book of Revelation tells us that, at the end time, God’s people will have the gift of prophecy. This gift will guide them in difficult times when Satan will do everything he can to trick and destroy them. God gave Adventists the gift of prophecy in the work and writings of Ellen G. White.

What are some of the most wonderful truths that God gave Ellen G. White to give to us?



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SATAN'S END-TIME TRICKS (2 Thessalonians 2:8–12)

Revelation 12:17 shows us a change in Satan's plan to win the loyalty of the people on the earth and attack God's followers. When we look at Christian history, we see that Satan often tried to stop God's plan to save sinners. Satan used body force and attacks to do his work. But when he gets ready for his final attack against God's end-time people, Satan adds tricks and lies to his attack. This change in Satan's attack also matches what we see in the book of Revelation. When Satan's attack starts to include tricks and lies, the chapters in Revelation stop talking about the history of God's church and start talking about what will happen in the end time.

It is important to see that in Revelation chapters 12–20, John often uses the word "fooled" or tricked. John uses this word a lot to show us what Satan will do in the end times to get ready for the last war against God and His people: Satan will use tricks and lies to turn people away from God. The word "fooled" starts and finishes what we read about Satan's end-time work in the book of Revelation (read Revelation 12:9, NLV; Revelation 20:7–10, NLV).



In Revelation 13, the dragon forms a team with the wild sea-animal power and the wild land-animal power. They work together to destroy God's work and lie to people.

2 Thessalonians 2:8–12; Revelation 13:13, 14; and Revelation 19:20 show us Satan's end-time tricks. What end-time tricks and lies does Satan use to fool people?

In Revelation 13–20, we learn how Satan tries to win people over to his side in the end times. To do that, he uses two government powers (the dragon and the wild land animal) and a religious government (the wild sea animal) to do his work. The dragon is a symbol for the Roman Kingdom and the worship of false gods. The wild sea animal is a symbol for the Roman Catholic Church (Revelation 13:1–10), and the wild land animal (Revelation 13:11–18) is a symbol for Protestant churches that have turned away from Bible truth. John shows us how the members of this team work together to destroy God's work and lie to people. The book of Revelation shows us that Satan's last trick on earth will be so powerful that most people will believe Satan.

Two times the book of Revelation warns people to be wise so that they can stand up against the devil's end-time attacks (Revelation 13:18; Revelation 17:9). What is John trying to tell us? What does James 1:5 say we must do?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Snares [traps] of Satan,” pages 518–530, in *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*.

The book of Revelation asks us to think carefully about what will happen in the future. We must depend on God. God must be number one in our lives. The book of Revelation tells us that, yes, Satan is a strong and skilled enemy. But Satan is not strong enough to beat Jesus (read Revelation 12:8). God’s people can find their hope only in Jesus. Jesus is the One who beat Satan and his team of demons and humans who were under Satan’s control. Jesus promises always to be with His loyal followers: “ ‘You can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end,’ ” (Matthew 28:20, NIRV).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ As Seventh-day Adventists, we understand that we are God’s special end-time people in the book of Revelation. Wow! It is an honor to be part of this group! Our being part of God’s special end-time people means that we must do the work that He gave us (read Luke 12:48). Why must we be careful not to think that God will save us just because we are a part of this special group?

❷ “We talk too much about the power of Satan. It is true that Satan is powerful. But I thank God for a mighty Savior who threw Satan out of heaven. We talk about the devil. We pray about him. We think about him. Then he becomes bigger and bigger in our minds. Why not talk about Jesus? Why not think about His power and love? Satan is happy when we believe that he is more powerful than he really is. Think about Jesus instead of Satan. When you think about Jesus, you will become the same as He is.”—Ellen G. White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 19, 1889. In what ways do Christians act as if Satan is more powerful than he really is? At the same time, what dangers can happen if we do not believe that Satan and his power are real?



Jesus promises always to be with His loyal followers to the very end (Matthew 28:20).