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Ascension Lutheran Church, Batavia IL
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Don't be Downcast, Satan has been Cast Down

Revelation 12:7-12

INI

Grace and peace to you from our God and His Christ who will come again in glory and all the holy angels with Him. To Him be all glory. Amen.

God has caused all Scripture to be written for our learning. The basis for our meditation is a vision – a vision given by the Holy Spirit to the apostle John,

Revelation 12:7-12 ⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So 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. ¹⁰ Then 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. ¹¹ And 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. ¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

Don't be Downcast, Satan has been Cast Down

1. He did not prevail against God and Christ
2. He did not prevail against Michael and his angels
3. He will not prevail against you and you brethren

Let us PRAY: O Almighty God, as we enter into this heavenly vision, so lead, guide, and guard our hearts and minds. Bring us to true joy by Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

In Jesus name, dear brethren in Christ, brothers and sisters of God's heavenly family,

Almost sounds like a comic book, doesn't it? An epic battle between good and evil. Cosmic forces waging war in the sky. Angels. A Dragon. A heavenly image.

How often do such Biblical images get passed off as just such – nothing more than picture books and fairy tales. And that is just the way Satan would have it. Satan wants us to think of him and his evil demons as nothing more than a myth. He likewise wants us to forget that its not just evil forces at work in this world and in our lives. He doesn't want you to know there is something good going on behind the scenes; there is something, someone that fights for you.

For the believer, however, there is so much more than meets the eye. We say it in the Nicene Creed – “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.” Even in the midst of such suffering, there remains a hidden hope, a concealed confidence, a good that is soon to be revealed. Even in the midst of our own sins and visible failures, there exists something good that fights for you, and conquers within you.

We enter into the Word of God for a behind the scenes look. An “apocalyptic” vision – literally – an “unveiling.” This vision unveils what would otherwise be hidden from us. We recognize today the presence of something invisible – an unveiled image of cosmic character. Behind the scenes, there is someone fighting and conquering. And what does this vision reveal? Satan has not and will not prevail. Repeated three times – “... cast out!” ... “he was cast to the earth!” ... that accuser has been cast out!” Dear fellow brethren, don't be downcast, for Satan has been cast down.

1. He did not prevail against God and Christ

We unveil this image; John's hand paints with words the view before his eyes – a heavenly portrait.

Have you ever viewed those 3-D images at the store. You know – the type where your spouse or friend says: “you just have to relax your eyes and let the image arise on its own.” Imagine this as your perspective on the text. Relax your eyes and mind. Get yourself fully zoomed out. Take it all in. See unveiled before your own eyes, this epic scene – the grand portrait of heaven and earth; what is it that you see?

A falling, fallen angel. All Satan ever wanted was to be like God; this was his downfall. He would not be content with the calling and order into which God had placed him. He wanted control; He wanted the throne.

Satan surmised that this victory would rest in proving something. He would need to prove that God's perfect creation could be over thrown. Beginning with that first man and that first woman, he would set forth to bring down God's beautiful design. If he could prove that these downcast creatures, these fallen sinners belong to him – then

God would lose. Or so he supposed. Therefore he “accuses them day and night before God.” And how we deserve to be accused. How dark our past, how guilty those moments.

But God would not settle for this. He would not listen to these accusations, for He so loves this world. He would pursue the downcast sinner. He would pursue sin all the way from heaven to earth.

Satan’s last hope was to seek God in his most vulnerable moment. As a good military tactician, he would seek out God’s weakness. And in God’s incarnation, he would have his chance. God was vulnerable. A mere child, a mortal like you and me. The second Adam had come and Satan would wage and rage.

The battle would be fierce. *1 John 3:8 For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.* He could have called down 12 legions of angels, but He didn’t. “In every respect He has been tempted as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus in, had to be, in every way, like us; a flesh and blood creature who relies solely on the promise and command of God. He would allow Himself to be lifted up to His most vulnerable position – arms stretched out, pierced through, forsaken, open to the condemnation of hell and all its darkness – His blood the price for the worst of our sins – He would be accused; but not defeated. For His blood was pure. His sacrifice complete. Satan was waging and raging, but not prevailing.

As you gaze into this image longer and longer, you begin to see it truly take shape. The shapes; the contour; the life that comes forth from this painting. You struggle to see it at first. But there right in the middle, seeming to rise out of the Word and stand forth; 3-dimensions – It is the Lamb. Slain yes, but no longer dead. Arising from the pages of Scripture, arising from the tomb itself is Jesus, the Christ, the chosen One, the one anointed to fulfill God’s victory. This Lamb lives; His blood lives and it cleanses us from all sin.

All wrapped up central moment is a loud voice from heaven ...

v.10 “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.

2. He did not prevail against Michael and his angels

As we see the heavenly strokes that brought this canvas to life – it truly is much more than a comic book story. It deals with something very real that we all know and experience – sin, pain, and death. And as we view this picture now with God and his Christ emerging in victory, we begin to notice all these sub-themes of the work. There is more to it. We “zoom in,” so to speak. We want to observe all the details.

We observe a heavenly host. We observe Michael, a chief angel as he is called, standing on the side of victory. When Satan rebelled, Michael was loyal. And while the evil angels followed Satan. The good angels stood fast with Michael. We read in Jude that these evil angels “did not keep their place of authority, they left their dwelling.” No longer was there a place for them in God’s holy army.

7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

Once Christ had risen and ascended to His throne in human flesh, all was settled. You can think of the good angels enforcing God’s decrees of salvation. The authority rested with those angels who were loyal to God. Think of these good angels as merely enforcing God’s salvation decrees.

v.9 So 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.

And now this same victory has come to you. For these same angels that stood loyal to God in heaven, stand loyal to God’s people. Don’t be downcast, Satan has been cast down.

3. He will not prevail against you and your brethren

Satan is a frustrated tyrant. He is a terrorist, a dictator of the worst degree. He is a enraged general who knows he is defeated. Nothing is left for him now than to take as many as he can with him; and he has only a short time.

Now this portrait changes perspectives. Now you see it from below. And Satan is no longer focused up to that place of blessing in the sky; He looks down. He looks to earth in anger. He wages and rages now with the sons and daughters of men.

Should we fear? After all, how can we prevail against this great dragon? He walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. How can we prevail? With all the sinful lures at his disposal, how can we, who are so very vulnerable, prevail? How can a young man addicted to pornography prevail when the internet and the media propagate and promotes a more convenient, more acceptable form of temptation? How can a married couple with facing a stressful life and different personalities prevail when they are surrounded by a world full of distractions; a world which promotes the idea that we all need to make ourselves happy no matter what the cost? How can a son without a father; a mother without a husband prevail? Mom is worn thin and there's no firm hand to share in the responsibilities. What downcast stories this world and our own sins produce. How can any of us prevail?

v.11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

And Satan's accusations are silenced. Never again can Satan bring these sins of your past against you. They are forgiven! By the blood of the Lamb and word of the testimony "The accuser has been cast down!" It is as if this painting bleeds life. By that sacrifice, the Lamb who was slain, we do prevail. The mouth of the dragon has been shut. He cannot accuse; he cannot control. Your life, your heart, your future belong to God.

For here is where the image all comes together – in the Word. This testimony has painted you into its story. You might say – a fourth dimension has been added. You are unveiled in Christ – He rises out of the pages, and as you see his form take shape, you see yourself in this picture. His uplifted hands are holding you, beyond the bite of the roaring lion. And legion upon legion of angels are waging war to defend you.

Psalm 91:11 for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.

See the angels unveiled in this victory. They are the behind the scenes servants. God's secret ops – caring, protecting, battling for you on earth. See the words of Daniel the prophet – Michael, one of the chief princes comes to help God's people. He comes to battle these evil forces.

Yes, this image has come to life. No longer is it a collection of stagnant colors on a page – it is in living color. It is rising out of this assembly and being shaped in this congregation. You are on the front lines.

It is on the front lines where this portrait comes to life. This picture comes to life as that married couple prevails. They begins to realize that their life is no longer about finding

happiness for the individual, but about their oneness together in Christ. They realize repentance and forgiveness are the essential elements of a strong Christ centered marriage.

This portrait takes shape again as that young man prevails over his addiction. He begins to seek help. He cries out for the blood of the Lamb which cleanses him from all sin. And his loved ones are ready and willing to help him with his burden.

Yet again this portrait is alive as that son prevails, as that mother overcomes – without a father; without a husband. They prevail as God gives His angels special charge over them. His angels to keep them in all their ways, however overwhelming they be.

No longer are these Christians down cast for the recognize: Satan is cast down!

So rejoice, O heavens! Be downcast no longer. Together with angels and archangels this painting is moving, shouting, waging war, and even touching you; it is snatching you away from the devils grasp each day – and even unto death. Yes, even unto death you live, rather than love you life, you love true life. Rather than dying while living, you live while dying.

Jesus said to his disciples, “I was seeing Satan fall.” Where ever Christ is present whether in the flesh or in His word, Satan will fall. Every time this good news of Christ is exercised, Satan falls to earth and is shackled in chains. He may climb, scratch, and roar, but there are boundaries he cannot cross; for they are engraved in the cross. His accusations are silenced. Each of those struggles; those certain tragedies that plague your mind, those certain worries are overcome as we join Martin Luther in singing ...

*Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us.
We tremble not, we fear no ill, They shall not overpower us.
This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none, He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.
TLH 262:3*

Don't be downcast. Satan is cast down! Amen.

Now the salvation and strength and honor of our God and the authority of His Christ have come! May the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.