

# The Easter Message told thru Revelations

Dear Friends,

There it is, right there in Revelations 12. In this dynamic chapter we find the Christmas and Easter stories. Along with cosmic warfare and the all-out war that Satan has declared on the people of God.

Before Revelations 12 begins we are reminded that God is a God of life who “will destroy all who have caused destruction on the earth” (Rev. 11:18). After all, “the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him” (Ps. 24:1).

The stage is set. The scenes unfold as we are taken to heaven where the temple of God is opened and the Ark of His covenant can be seen inside the Temple. Then we are returned to earth where, “lightning flashed, thunder crashed and roared: there was a great hailstorm, and the world was shaken by a mighty earthquake” (Rev. 11:19).

With lighting, thunder, a hailstorm and an earthquake taking place on earth, John proceeds to give us a darker view of the first Christmas. A woman, some believing represents Mary while others think it is Israel, is about to give birth to a son (Christ). Lurking in the shadows is the large red dragon – “the ancient serpent the shadows is the large red dragon – “the ancient serpent called the Devil or Satan,” (Rev. 12:9), who is trying to kill the child. This isn’t just some kind of far out Science fiction story. It actually happened when Herod ordered the execution of all the male babies at the time Jesus was born” (see Matt. 2:13-20).

Following the rescue of the Christ child both in heaven and on earth we see the battle later unfold in the results of the Easter story take place. Christ has died and then is victoriously raised from the dead. As this happens there is “war in heaven. Michael and the angels under his command fought the dragon and his angels. And the dragon lost the battle and was forced out of heaven” (Rev. 12:7, 8). The end result is that “Satan, the one deceiving the end result is that “Satan, the one deceiving the whole world was thrown down to earth with all his angels” (vs. 9).

Shouting across the heavens the message of the resurrection is proclaimed. “It has happened at last – the salvation and power and kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ! For the Accuser has been thrown down to earth – the one who accused our brothers and sisters before our God day and night. And they have defeated him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of their testimony. And they were not afraid to die. Rejoice, O heavens! And you who live in the heavens, rejoice! But terror will come on the earth and the sea. For the Devil has come down to you in great anger, and he knows that he has little time” (Rev. 12:10-12).

Satan after being thrown out of heavens now on earth declaring all-out war “against all who keep God’s commandments and confess that they belong to Jesus” (vs. 17). Satan is joined by the beast who has been given Satan’s “authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation. And all the people who belong to this world worshipped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life” (Rev. 13:7, 8).

John in his marvelous book of Revelation is showing believers what to expect when Satan goes on his vicious rampage of destruction, knowing that his time is short. Rev. 10:11 says, “The people who are destined for prison will be arrested and taken away. Those who are destined for death will be killed. But do not be dismayed, for here is your opportunity to have endurance and faith.”

We are liberated from the fear of death as the reality of the victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ takes root in our lives. Satan and his beasts can no longer control us. As they perform their miracles and require “everyone – great and small, rich and poor, slave and free – to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead” (vs. 16), the believer is able to resist Satan’s mark. They have already been covered by the shed blood of the lamb Jesus Christ and “have defeated him (Satan) because of the blood of the lamb and because of their testimony. And they were not afraid to die” (Rev. 12:11).

Let's take a look for a moment at the two beasts that came on the scene in Revelations 13. The first seems to be the incarnation of Satan as the seven headed dragon. John by introducing the beast is showing evil taking a tangible political form that has authority over the daily lives of people. When John wrote Revelations that authority was Rome. For us it can be city, state or federal laws or any system that enslaves us mentally or physically when it comes to performing the work and will of God. This can include local regulations that keep us from feeding the hungry or sheltering the homeless.

In Revelations the beast is opposite from the Lamb. This Lamb of God of course is Jesus who has come to take away the sins of the world. The power of God is taking place through the Lamb while the power of evil is revealed through the beast. We also see that as the Lamb rises from the dead to give life to others, the beast rises from the dead to inflict death. The Lamb seeks to redeem the people while the beast strives to control and oppress the people while the beast strives to control and oppress.

The second beast John introduces to us in Revelations 13 is one who promotes the imperial cult of absolute control by government. It is perpetuated by those who have the most to gain when government is in absolute control. This beast uses fear and whatever authority it can get from the local, state, or federal government to invest in it so it can benefit financially at the cost of others. This includes the power of eminent domain to take the homes of the poor and elderly for economic purposes. The second beast has the right to install cameras at stop lights or create monopolistic utility companies that can raise rates beyond the abilities of the poor and elderly to maintain their utility service. The second beast has the power to try to shut down churches that want to shelter the homeless or feed the hungry.

John speaks of how the beast can mark those who do not support its system of control to the extent that "no one can buy or sell anything without that mark, which was either the name of the beast or the number representing his name" (Rev. 13:17).

John then takes us to the glorious scene of worship, which are taking place in heaven, while Satan and his beasts are waging war on the people living on the earth. For some, worship is an expression of a person's basic commitments, not only revealed through their words, but supported by their actions. Authentic worship takes place when people are willing to resist the power of Satan and his beasts even to the point of death. Worship reveals what people value and respect the most.

The question John poses for each of us is whether our highest loyalty belongs to the empire or to God and what He calls us to do. It was for this reason I chose to be arrested in May, 2012 when the empire said myself and other believers could not worship and do the work of God at Hwy 44 and Vandeventer in St. Louis. It is also this desire to be loyal to the mandates of scripture that I continue to stand firm along with my fellow believers against those beasts, those ambassadors of Satan, who try to stop us and other churches from providing sanctuary and shelter for the hurting and homeless.

John in the Book of Revelations says the maker of the beast put on the forehead and right hand is 666. Scholars have determined that the value of the Hebrews letters for New Caesar is 666. The beast in Revelations 13 has traits of an emperor like Nero. In our case it can be anyone or any system which tries to stop us from living a life of total allegiance and loyalty to the Lamb of God, who has come to liberate us from sin, death and the devil.

The mark of the beast is that which gives us our identity. Is it God or the empire? Who are we going to serve? Will it be the Lamb or the Beast, even when it seems the beast has been given control of our right to buy or sell.

In Revelations 14 John shows us what is going on in heaven while Satan and his beasts are waging war against believers on earth. As we visit heaven we witness a glorious worship service taking place. It consists of those who have resisted being marked and identified as being part of the world's system and are willing to follow the Lamb even if it costs them their lives.

Suddenly three angels come on the scene and describe in detail what happens to those who take the mark of the beast and gain their identity through Satan's system of control. They also tell us what happens to the materialistic system on earth that is referred to in Revelations as Babylon.

Here is what John saw and then reported in Revelations 14:6-12. "And I saw another angel flying through the heavens, carrying the everlasting Good News to preach to the people who belong to this world – to every nation, tribe, language and people 'Fear God' he shouted. 'Give glory to him. For the time has come when He will sit as judge. Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all the springs of water'".

Then another angel followed Him through the skies, shouting, 'Babylon is fallen – that great city is fallen – because she seduced the nations of the world and made them drink the wine of her passionate immorality.'

Then another angel followed Him through the skies, shouting, 'Babylon is fallen – that great city is fallen – because she seduced the nations of the world and made them drink the wine of her passionate immorality.'

"Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or accepts his mark on the forehead or the hand must drink the wine of God's wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angel and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they worshipped the beast and his statue and have accepted thru mark of his name. Let this encourage God's holy people to endure persecution patiently and remain firm to the end, obeying His commands and trusting in Jesus."

Satan knows his time is short. All out warfare has broken out on earth. The devil walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. This great deceiver has confused so many that right seems to be wrong while wrong appears to be right. Gluttony, pride, immorality, injustice and greed has become the order of the day. But don't deceive yourself it's a fact pay day is coming. Nobody gets away with anything. As Paul said in Gal. 6:7, 'You can't ignore God and get away with it.'

Jesus is also the righteous Judge who Revelations 14 says will one day separate those who have sold out to Satan and his system from those who have remained faithful to Him. John goes on to tell us in verses 13-15, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from all their toils and trials; for their good deeds follow!'"

Then I saw the Son of Man sitting on a white cloud. He had a gold crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand."

"Then an angel came from the Temple and called out in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud. 'Use the sickle for the time has come for you to harvest; the crop is ripe on the earth.' So the one sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the whole earth was harvested."

The harvest has begun. Go on and read verses 17-20 and see how Jesus separates the faithful from the faithless in the same way a farmer separates his crops.

The time has come. A decision must be made as Elijah said, "Choose ye this day the God you will serve."

John goes on to remind us again and again throughout the book of Revelations the end result of the daily decisions we make now. In Rev. 21:3-8 he reports, "I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, 'Look, the home of God is now among His people! He will live with them, and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them. He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever."

"And the one sitting on the throne said, 'Look, I am making all things new.' And then he said to me, 'Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.' And He also said, 'It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega – the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give the springs of the water of life without charge! All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But cowards who turn away from me, and unbelievers, and the corrupt and murders and the immoral and those who practice witchcraft and idol worshipers and all liars – their doom is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death."

This is no time for us to be cowards and unbelievers who are destined along with the murders, immoral, corrupt, witchcraft and idol worshippers and liars destined for hell. The time has come for us to build our faith up in the Word of God so we no longer let fear keep us from doing the work and will of God.

As a result of the victorious Easter event of the resurrection Satan has been thrown out of heaven. Knowing his time is short we are now seeing and hearing of immorality, murders and ungodliness like never before. But it won't be long and Jesus will be coming back. Will He find you engaged in His work, marked by His love?

Even now He is saying, "See I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay all according to their deeds. I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:13).

Don't be one of the dogs left outside with the rest of the unrepentant sinners. Now is the time to be washed in the blood of the Lamb and eat from the tree of life. Revelations 22:14-18 invites us now to come and drink of the eternal waters of life that only the Risen Christ can give.

"Blessed are those who wash their robes so they can enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. Outside the city are the dogs – the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murders, the idol worshippers, and all who love to live a lie."

"I Jesus have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star."

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'. Let each one who hears them say, 'Come'. Let the thirsty ones come – anyone who wants to. Let them come and drink the water of life without charge."

The invitation has now been given. The decision is yours. Come now and drink from the living waters of the resurrected Christ. You can do this by reading His Word, trusting Him as your Lord, Savior and Redeemer and determining in your heart to obey Him daily in word and deed.

Yours in Christ Service,

*Larry Rice*  
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