

Small Group Study Guide

Revelation 12–14: The Dragon and the Victory of the Lamb

Revelation unveils the deeper spiritual conflict behind the events of history. The dragon works through deception and empire to capture human allegiance, but the decisive victory has already been won through the Lamb who was slain. God's people overcome not by force but by the blood of the Lamb and their faithful witness.

Introduction (Leader Notes)

Before reading, remind the group of the interpretive approach used throughout the study.

From the sermon notes:

“Revelation is a real letter to real churches written by a real pastor... not a code to be deciphered but a vision meant to shape the imagination of the church.”

Revelation is written in **Jewish apocalyptic imagery**, which means it communicates truth through vivid symbols and dramatic pictures.

Its purpose is not prediction but **formation**.

“The message is not ‘Predict the future’ but rather ‘See the world truthfully.’”

John wants believers to see the **spiritual reality behind political and cultural power** so they can remain faithful.

Context: Revelation 12–14 (Leader Overview)

These chapters form a **dramatic middle section** of the book.

Chapter	Main Images	Focus
Revelation 12	Woman, child, dragon	The cosmic conflict behind history
Revelation 13	Two beasts, mark of the beast	Political and ideological power of empire
Revelation 14	Lamb and the faithful	The ultimate victory of God

Revelation 11 ended with the declaration:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah.”

But Revelation is **not linear**.

John now tells the story again from another angle.

As the sermon described:

“This time, we read the Christmas story according to John of Patmos.”

Scripture Reading

Read **Revelation 12:1–17** aloud.

Encourage participants to listen for:

- the characters
 - the conflict
 - how victory is described
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Section 1 – The Unveiling of the Conflict

Read Revelation 12:1–6

Observation Questions

1. What major characters appear in the vision?
 2. What is the dragon attempting to do?
 3. What happens to the child?
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Leader Notes

Many scholars understand the imagery like this:

Symbol	Likely Meaning
Woman	The covenant people of God (Israel → church)
Child	Jesus the Messiah
Dragon	Satan working through earthly powers

The imagery intentionally echoes the **birth of Jesus**.

The dragon trying to devour the child reflects the **hostility of empire toward God's kingdom**.

From the sermon notes:

“John portrays evil as a counterfeit kingdom, always trying to devour what God brings into the world.”

This conflict is not merely political or cultural — it is **spiritual**.

Paul says something similar in **Ephesians 6:12**:

“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities and spiritual forces of evil.”

John is unveiling the **spiritual dimension behind history**.

Section 2 – The Dragon's Defeat

Read Revelation 12:7–12

Discussion Questions

1. What happens to the dragon in this passage?
 2. What does the text say about his current status?
 3. How does this change the way we view evil in the world?
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Leader Notes

The key point John wants the church to see:

The dragon has already been defeated.

“Satan is not winning. He has already been thrown down.”

The victory occurred through **the cross and resurrection of Jesus**.

Colossians 2:15 says:

“Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”

This means the dragon’s power is **real but limited**.

He is dangerous, but he is **already defeated**.

Section 3 – How the Church Overcomes

Read Revelation 12:10–11

“They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.”

Discussion Questions

1. What two things lead to victory over the dragon?
 2. Why do you think these methods are surprising?
 3. How does this contrast with the way the world usually confronts power?
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Leader Notes

The victory is not achieved through violence or political power.

Instead, it comes through:

1. **The blood of the Lamb (Jesus’ sacrifice)**
2. **Faithful witness (testimony)**

Scot McKnight writes:

“The Lamb conquers not by shedding the blood of others but by shedding his own.”

This is one of the most important themes in Revelation.

The church defeats the dragon not by fighting like the dragon, but by living like the Lamb.

Section 4 – Why Evil Still Attacks

Read Revelation 12:13–17

Discussion Questions

1. If Satan has already been defeated, why does he still attack?
 2. Who are the dragon's targets in verse 17?
 3. What does faithful resistance look like today?
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Leader Notes

The dragon attacks because he **knows his time is short**.

This explains why evil can still appear powerful even after Christ's victory.

From the sermon:

“The dragon is real—but defeated.
The Lamb reigns—even when the world looks unstable.”

The dragon wages war against:

“those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.”

In other words: **the church**.

Section 5 – The Counterfeit Kingdom (Revelation 13–14 Overview)

The story continues in the next chapters.

Revelation 13

The dragon empowers two beasts:

Beast	Symbol
Beast from the sea	Political power
Beast from the earth	Propaganda / ideology

These powers attempt to capture **human allegiance**.

The famous number **666** represents the ultimate counterfeit kingdom.

Darrell Johnson describes it as:

“Human power attempting to be divine, but always falling short.”

Revelation 14

In contrast to the beasts, John sees:

The Lamb standing with his people.

This chapter reassures the church that **the Lamb ultimately wins**.

Reflection: Seeing the World Truthfully

Richard Bauckham writes that Revelation was meant to:

“liberate the Christian imagination from the propaganda of empire.”

This was true for Christians living under Rome.

It is still true today.

When political crises, global conflicts, or cultural tensions dominate the news cycle, Revelation reminds us:

- The dragon is real—but defeated.
 - The Lamb reigns—even when the world looks unstable.
 - Our calling is faithfulness.
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Final Discussion Questions

1. Where do you see the “propaganda of empire” shaping people’s thinking today?
 2. What might it look like to “follow the Lamb more closely” in your daily life?
 3. What practices help you remain faithful when the world feels unstable?
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Closing Reflection (Leader)

From the sermon notes:

“The church conquers the dragon not by fighting harder, but by following the Lamb more closely.”
— Darrell Johnson

Revelation does not call Christians to panic or speculation.

It calls us to **faithfulness**.

Faithfulness looks like:

- loving our neighbours
- praying for peace
- caring for those who suffer
- refusing hatred or despair
- speaking truth shaped by the gospel

In the end, Revelation promises:

The Lamb — and those who follow him — will stand.
