

Revelation 12:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Analysis

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.... This verse from Revelation's vision of woman, child, and dragon - cosmic conflict, satan's defeat, messiah's victory employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

Historical Context

John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 12:9 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?
2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?

3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐβλήθησαν οἱ δράκων οἱ μέγας οἱ ὄφις
 And he was cast out which dragon which the great which serpent
 G2532 G906 G3588 G1404 G3588 G3173 G3588 G3789

οἱ ἀρχαῖος οἱ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ οἱ
 which that old which called the Devil And which
 G3588 G744 G3588 G2564 G1228 G2532 G3588

Σατανᾶς οἱ πλανῶν οἱ οἰκουμένην ὅλην
 Satan which deceiveth which world the whole
 G4567 G3588 G4105 G3588 G3625 G3650

ἐβλήθησαν εἰς οἱ γῆν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ'
 he was cast out into which the earth And which angels him with
 G906 G1519 G3588 G1093 G2532 G3588 G32 G846 G3326

αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν
 him he was cast out
 G846 G906

Additional Cross-References

Luke 10:18 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

John 12:31 (Parallel theme): Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Revelation 20:10 (Evil): And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

1 John 5:19 (Evil): And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

Isaiah 14:12 (Parallel theme): How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

2 Corinthians 4:4 (Parallel theme): In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Genesis 3:1 (Parallel theme): Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Isaiah 65:25 (Parallel theme): The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

John 8:44 (Evil): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Revelation 12:7 (Parallel theme): And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,