



THE SECOND SUNDAY OF END TIME – SAINTS TRIUMPHANT

Light of the Valley Lutheran Church

V-Day: The Accuser Has Been Hurlled Down!

Revelation 12:7-12 (NIV84)

⁷ And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. ¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ¹¹ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

“Your eyes can deceive you; don’t trust them,” said Obi-Wan Kenobi in the original Star Wars. As Luke was training with his lightsaber for the first time with his eyes covered by a blast shield, Obi-Wan used that phrase to talk about relying on the force - a fantasy fiction idea of a mysterious energy field people could tap into to control actions and even help you “see” the future.

Star Wars is good fiction, but there is truth to the concept that our eyes cannot see everything. We know air is moving, but only see it with the swaying of tree branches and when the temperature drops down to freezing and you see your breath. We can feel heat, but can’t necessarily see it. Emotions like love, trust, and care are expressed in actions, but the emotions in and of themselves, we can’t see.

There is more to this life than what we see. There are spiritual forces living around us, interacting with us. God sends his angels to guard us in all our ways as Psalm 91 says. In the life of the prophet Elisha, the king of Israel was surrounded by the king of Aram’s forces. Having surveyed the imposing armies’ superior numbers, Elisha’s servant asked, “What shall we do?” Elisha answered, “Don’t be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:15-17)

We ourselves are part of this spiritual world because we have souls. God did not make us only of organic material; he also breathed into the first man the breath of life. We are body and spirit. As such, we are not affected only by what we can see. We are affected spiritually as a war rages. Revelation chapter 12 says, “And there was war in heaven.” (verse 7)

At first, when we hear the word “heaven,” we think of the afterlife. We think about our dwelling with God for all eternity. If we take the word “heaven” in that way here, the ensuing battle would be understood as the devil’s expulsion from heaven. Fitting better with the events and chronology of the Revelation vision, what John is trying to convey is a battle that was going on as Jesus came into the world as both God and Man.

This war in heaven is the battle of the spiritual realm: “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.” (verse 7) Thus, we could not see this battle taking place. Although not gone from our world, we know that stories of demon possessions and things like that are few and far between nowadays while they seemed to run rampant during Jesus’ time. That only makes sense if at the same time Jesus was walking the earth, fulfilling the law for us, getting ready to sacrifice his life for us, Satan and his angels were waging war against God, trying to get Jesus to fail.

In this war, the devil wasn’t using artillery or aircraft or bombs. His weapons of choice, his WMDs, were accusations. John tells us that Satan is “the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night.” (verse 10) For the congregations that John was sharing this vision with, he knew the devil was berating people’s consciences over whether or not they would give up their lives in service to Christ, in martyrdom. Who doesn’t want to keep their life? But in the culture and society that they were living in, it was more than unpopular to be a Christian. Being a Christian meant putting your life on the line as some were seeking to eradicate Christians and Christianity from the world.

You can imagine the uncomfortable conversations Christians might find themselves in. Someone starts complaining about all these Christians, raising all sorts of ruckus and controversy while they push their ideas down your throat about what to believe. And when

you don't show the same attitude, the eyebrow raises with the question, "Wait, you aren't a Christian, are you?" Your heart starts beating a little faster, your palms get a bit sweaty, and you're hoping your face isn't giving away your answer. You're on the spot. Will you confess Jesus as your Savior, or will you keep quiet and save yourself from a public execution? Do you love your life more than Jesus?

Christians in the past have denied their faith to save their lives. Even Peter famously did so in the early morning leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. People have shrunk back from their faith because they saw no other way to preserve their life. After doing so, you may have wept like Peter in repentance. Meanwhile there is this voice of accusation that begins. "You denied Jesus. You wouldn't stand up for him. You tried to disassociate yourself from him. And you call yourself one of his followers? You're not worthy to carry the name. He will deny you for denying him." The accusations keep coming, never a cease fire. The guilt mounts. Where do you turn?

We may not be putting our lives on the line to claim to be followers of Christ in our country, but while we are on this physical world we are fighting a spiritual war with the Accuser. He picks up on what we've done. He stands before God the Judge and brings the accusations and evidence forward. "November 9, 2014 at 7:07 AM, this person didn't want to get up for church. He didn't love you enough to jump for joy at the prospect of hearing your Word and worshipping you in song." "8:14 AM, this spouse sat and read the paper instead of helping get breakfast for the kids. It's simple selfishness." "9:03 AM, this parent yelled at their kids to get ready. Such a temper and such anger certainly mean that they are not worthy of your mercy." "9:12 AM, this person muttered hateful words under their breath about the drivers on the road and the fact that they were running late for church. They can't even come to your house without sinning against someone."

And these are just the little things. Satan loves to accuse. He wants to so burden our consciences that we give up our fight against him and just admit defeat. He wants us to surrender to him, to lose a war that has already been decided.

That's right. The fate of that war in heaven was very quickly decided. "But [Satan] was not strong enough, and [he along with his angels] lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down... to the earth, and his angels with him." (verses 8-9)

The headline for the war's result reads "V-Day: The Accuser has been hurled down!" The victory has been won! His accusations mean nothing. He could hurl all the accusations he wanted to the believers in John's day, but the devil had already been overcome. The cross signifies his defeat. The blood that stained Calvary hill decimated Satan's accusations. He was overcome by the blood of the Lamb. That blood covered their guilt. John told them the outcome of the war so that they did not shrink back from death. With news of this victory, the Christians of John's day boldly confessed their faith knowing that it might very well lead to the end of their earthly life.

The headline still reads for us today, "V-Day: The Accuser has been hurled down!" As the voice from heaven said, "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ." (verse 10) The victory stands. The Accuser cannot convict us. When we hear those accusations, when we feel the guilt of our many sins, we fire right back at Satan, "The blood of the Lamb covers me. I am forgiven. He has paid the price. Because of what the Lamb of God did, I am worthy to be called his own. I belong to him. I share his victory over you."

Even with this victory, dear Christians, make no mistake about it; Satan is still fighting a war that has been decided. "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." (verse 12) He is lashing out at us with these accusations to make us despair, to get us to surrender. It's like the Battle of New Orleans from the War of 1812. The war had already been decided. The U.S. had won. The Treaty of Ghent was signed on December 24, 1814, but the hostilities continued until January 18, 1815 when all the British forces finally retreated. Just under 5,000 U.S. troops went up against 11,000 British soldiers. They fought fiercely. Little did they know that this battle would not change the outcome. The U.S. had won. Soldiers were sacrificed needlessly. They had not seen the signed treaty declaring victory and peace.

Satan still thinks he can win, and he fights like a man with nothing to lose. But his defeat is certain. It has already been decided by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, our champion and victor. Satan continues to vehemently accuse us before God, but God has taken every bit of power of those accusations and made them null and void. We are forgiven. We are covered by the blood of the Lamb.

Rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! Onward, Christian Soldiers! March into battle against Satan with absolute victory already in hand. We have overcome the Accuser by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of his gospel testimony. We've won because Christ has won. We may not have seen it with our own eyes, but it's true. It's V-Day. The Accuser has been hurled down! We are Saints Triumphant! Amen!