

REVEALED Special Study– The Dragon’s Goals

While **suffering** is a reality for the Church, the ultimate **goal of the enemy** (the Dragon, the Beast, and Babylon) is not merely to inflict pain but to deceive believers and lead them into despair, compromise, or outright rejection of Christ.

Revelation reveals that the true battle is not just **physical persecution** but a **spiritual war** for the hearts and minds of believers.

1. The Enemy’s Primary Weapons: Deception and Despair

In **Revelation 12-13**, the **Dragon (Satan)** wages war against the Church, using two key strategies:

A. Deception: The Lies of the Dragon and the Beast (Revelation 13)

The **Beast from the sea** and the **Beast from the earth (False Prophet)** work together to deceive the world into following them.

“By the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast.” (Revelation 13:14, ESV)

The **goal of the Beast** is not just to oppress believers but to manipulate them into false worship.

- **Suffering is a tool to pressure believers into compromise.**
- **Deception makes that compromise seem reasonable, even necessary.**
- **The Beast offers an alternative “truth” that competes with Christ’s reign.**

This is why **Scripture repeatedly warns against deception**:

“Let no one deceive you in any way.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, ESV)

“For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24, ESV)

B. Despair: The Goal of Persecution (Revelation 12:17)

When deception doesn’t work, **persecution is used to break believers’ endurance**.

“Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” (Revelation 12:17, ESV)

The **goal of persecution** is not simply to cause pain—it is to make believers give up.

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- The **Beast pressures the Church to abandon its witness.**
- **Babylon entices believers to trade faithfulness for comfort.**
- The Dragon **wants believers to lose hope and feel abandoned by God.**

Michael Gorman: The Real Threat is Not Persecution but Compromise

Michael Gorman, in *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, warns:

“Revelation is clear: **the greatest danger to the Church is not suffering, but accommodation to the world’s ways.** The enemy’s goal is to make faith seem futile, to make compromise seem harmless, and to make endurance seem impossible.” (*Reading Revelation Responsibly*, p. 143)

2. The Contrast Between Those Who Endure and Those Who Fall

Revelation shows two different responses to **suffering and deception**:

Faithful Witnesses	Those Who Fall Away
The Two Witnesses (Revelation 11) – Killed for their testimony but resurrected	The Great Prostitute (Revelation 17) – Those who join Babylon for comfort and power
The Great Multitude (Revelation 7) – Suffer through tribulation but stand before God in white robes	The Marked Followers of the Beast (Revelation 13:16-17) – Those who choose economic security over faithfulness
The Saints Who Conquer (Revelation 12:11) – Overcome by the blood of the Lamb and their testimony	The Kings of the Earth (Revelation 18:9-10) – Those who align with Babylon and weep when it falls

The dividing line is **not who suffers but who remains faithful** despite suffering and deception.

3. How the Enemy Uses These Tactics Today

Revelation’s warnings are **not just about the future**—they apply to the **pressures and temptations the Church faces now.**

A. Deception: The Cultural Lies That Challenge Our Faith

Just like the **Beast’s false signs** in Revelation 13, today’s world **presents distorted truths that compete with Christ’s reign:**

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- **Materialism** – Security and success come from wealth, not from faithfulness to God.
- **Moral Relativism** – There is no absolute truth; personal experience defines right and wrong.
- **Political Idolatry** – Aligning with a political power can bring God’s kingdom to earth.

Revelation **calls believers to resist these deceptions and hold to the truth of Christ’s reign.**

“Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.” (Revelation 14:12, ESV)

B. Despair: The Pressure to Give Up

Suffering **is meant to make us feel abandoned, powerless, and discouraged.**

- The **Church in Smyrna** was **facing poverty and affliction** (Revelation 2:9).
- The **Christians in Philadelphia** had **“little power” but remained faithful** (Revelation 3:8).

Revelation reminds us:

- **Suffering is temporary, but faithfulness lasts forever.**
- **Endurance leads to eternal reward.**
- **The Lamb has already won—so we hold on.**

4. The Response: How to Overcome Deception and Despair

Since the **real goal of the enemy is not just suffering but deception and despair**, how do we stand firm?

A. Resist Deception by Holding to God’s Word

“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17, ESV)

- **Regularly engage with Scripture** to anchor ourselves in truth.
- **Recognize the Beast’s false narratives**—test everything against God’s Word.

B. Endure Suffering by Looking to Jesus’ Victory

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.” (2 Corinthians 4:17, ESV)

- Suffering is **not meaningless—it is shaping us for eternal glory.**

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- Jesus **suffered before He was glorified**—we follow His path.

C. Worship as an Act of Resistance

“They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” (Revelation 12:11, ESV)

- Worship **keeps us focused on who is really in control.**
- The enemy **wants us to be discouraged**—worship reminds us that God reigns.

5. Conclusion: Why This Matters

1. **Satan’s real goal is to lead believers away from Christ, not just to make them suffer.**
2. **Deception makes compromise seem reasonable, and despair makes faithfulness seem impossible.**
3. **The Church is called to overcome not by escaping suffering, but by remaining faithful in the face of it.**
4. **Worship, Scripture, and endurance are our weapons against deception and despair.**

Final Thought:

The enemy wants to break us through lies and fear, but the Lamb has already won—so we hold on.

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10, ESV)