

and the sea' (verse 12) 'because the devil has come down to you in great anger, knowing that he only has a short time.' The decisive battle has been won, and the devil knows it; but his basic nature of 'accuser' is now driving him, more and more frantically, to the attack, to accuse where it's justified and where it isn't, to drag down, to slander, to vilify, to deny the truth of what the creator God and his son, the lamb, have accomplished and are accomplishing. This is the ongoing battle in which all Christians are engaged, whether they know it or not. The picture John has sketched in this chapter, to encourage and warn his readers and all those who, even today, read his book, is just the opening scene. More is to come. The dragon ends up standing on the sand beside the sea. And the sea, as all ancient Jews knew, was the dark place out of which monsters might emerge (112-113).

Leader: read aloud Revelation 12:17.

Optional Discussion Questions

1. Where do you see the Christian church under attack around the world today?
2. How does this affect how we pray? How often do we hear and offer prayers for the Church around the world in public worship?
3. Do you think the Church is under new threats in the 21st century, or do you think there is nothing new under the sun and the people of God have always been vulnerable?
4. How do we see "the dragon" making war with those who keep the commandments and holding to the testimony of Jesus?
5. How do you experience this in your own life?

Closing Prayer: The dragon seeks us out, O God, longing to accuse and destroy. It is his voice that tells us that we are unworthy of love, that we will never amount to anything, and that we are not good enough. Silence him, mighty God, and remind us that the dragon is already defeated because of the blood

