

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

ANGELOLOGY

The Doctrine of Angels, Demons, and the Spiritual Realm

UNIT 7: THE DEFEAT OF SATAN AND THE DESTINY OF THE DEMONIC REALM

Lesson 18

The Victory of the Cross — Satan's Decisive Defeat

Disarmed, Disgraced, and Doomed at Calvary

Key Texts: Genesis 3:15; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14–15; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:7–12; John 12:31; 16:11

“When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”

Colossians 2:15, NASB 1995

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Introduction

Unit 7 is the eschatological conclusion of the entire Angelology series, the section toward which every preceding lesson has been building and from which every preceding lesson receives its ultimate theological weight. The series opened with the worship of the holy angels before the divine throne and the comprehensive Christological lordship that governs the entire invisible realm; it has moved through the nature and ministry of the holy angels, the fall of Satan, the demonic realm and its activity, the Christological triumph over the demonic in Jesus' earthly ministry, and the theology of spiritual warfare. It now arrives at the question that gives the whole its ultimate significance: how does it all end? What is the final destiny of the adversary who has opposed God and afflicted His people since the garden of Eden? And what does the certainty of that destiny mean for the church that is presently engaged in the conflict whose outcome it describes?

Lesson 18 focuses on the decisive event in the long narrative arc of the satanic rebellion and its defeat: the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross is not, in this lesson, primarily the place where human sin is atoned for, though of course it is that, comprehensively and sufficiently. It is, here, the place where the cosmic conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent that Genesis 3:15 announced reaches its decisive turning point; where the rulers and authorities are disarmed and publicly displayed in the triumphal procession of the Victor; where the one who had the power of death is rendered powerless; where the Son of God accomplishes the purpose for which He appeared, the destruction of the works of the devil. Calvary is the D-Day of the cosmic conflict, the moment when the decisive battle is won and the outcome of the war is determined, even as the fighting continues until the final V-Day consummation.

This lesson brings together the five primary New Testament texts that describe the cross's defeat of the demonic realm, Genesis 3:15 (the protoevangelium and its fulfillment), Colossians 2:15 (the disarming and triumphal procession), Hebrews 2:14–15 (the rendering powerless of the one who had the power of death), 1 John 3:8 (the purpose of the Incarnation as the destruction of the devil's works), and Revelation 12:12 (the adversary's fury as the fury of a defeated enemy who knows his time is short), and weaves them into the most comprehensive biblical-theological portrait of what the cross accomplished in relation to the demonic realm that the series has yet provided. The lesson also introduces the D-Day/V-Day analogy of Oscar Cullmann as the most illuminating theological image for holding together the already and the not yet of the demonic defeat, and closes with the pastoral assurance that the conflict the believer is presently engaged in is a conflict whose outcome has already been determined at Calvary.

A word on the register of this lesson: it is, deliberately, the most doxological lesson in the series. The preceding lessons have been primarily doctrinal in their register, establishing what the Scripture teaches, correcting what it does not teach, equipping the church for the conflict. This lesson turns the corner toward the eschatological and the doxological, the celebration of what Christ has already accomplished and the confident anticipation of what He will accomplish at the appointed consummation. The tone of the lesson is the tone of those who have read to the end of the story and know how it concludes: not the anxious tone of those who are still uncertain whether the right side will win, but the confident,

worshipping tone of those who have seen the Victor crowned and are living in the interval between His crowning and the final public acknowledgment of what has already been accomplished.

I. The Protoevangelium: The Promise Made at the Beginning

Genesis 3:15 as the First Announcement of the Cross and Its Demonological Significance

The most ancient biblical text in the series' engagement with the demonic realm is also the first announcement of its ultimate defeat. Genesis 3:14–15, spoken by God directly to the serpent in the immediate aftermath of the fall, contains within it the entire arc of the redemptive-historical conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (Genesis 3:15, NASB 1995). The passage is the protoevangelium, the first gospel, the first proclamation of the coming redemption, and it frames that redemption from the very beginning as a conflict between two seeds, culminating in a decisive victory of the seed of the woman over the head of the serpent.

The demonological significance of the protoevangelium is immense. First, it establishes the personal character of the adversary: God does not address an impersonal force or a mythological symbol; He addresses the serpent, the personal being who has been identified throughout this series as the one who disguises himself as an angel of light, who was a murderer from the beginning, and who is the prince of this world. The condemnation is personal, specific, and prophetic: the head of this particular personal adversary will be crushed by the seed of the woman. Second, the enmity declared between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is the theological foundation for the entire cosmic conflict that the series has traced from Genesis through Revelation: every act of satanic opposition to the people of God, every demonic assault on the gospel, every attempt of the adversary to prevent or pervert the redemptive purposes of God is an expression of the enmity that God Himself inaugurated in Genesis 3:15 as the framework within which redemption would be accomplished.

Third, and most doxologically significant, the asymmetry of the bruising, head versus heel, anticipates the asymmetry of the cross's victory. The bruising of the heel suggests a genuine wound, real suffering, a cost paid by the seed of the woman in the process of accomplishing the victory. The cross was genuinely costly: the Son of God suffered genuinely, died genuinely, and descended into the experience of abandonment in the darkness of the crucifixion. The heel was genuinely bruised. But the crushing of the head is a mortal blow, the head is the seat of the serpent's authority, the source of his power, the location of his vitality. The cross crushed the head of the serpent precisely in the moment when the heel was being bruised: the death of the Son of God was simultaneously the cost of the victory and the achievement of it. Paul confirms this connection explicitly in Romans 16:20: “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet,” deploying the Genesis 3:15 language to describe the eschatological consummation of a defeat already accomplished in principle at the cross.

“He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” Genesis 3:15, NASB 1995

II. Colossians 2:15: The Disarming and the Triumphal Procession

The Most Comprehensive Pauline Statement of What the Cross Accomplished Against the Demonic Powers

Colossians 2:15 is the most theologically concentrated and most doxologically magnificent of all the New Testament texts describing the cross’s defeat of the demonic realm: “When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him” (NASB 1995). The verse occurs within a dense Christological and soteriological argument (Colossians 2:9–15) that begins with the affirmation of Christ’s comprehensive deity (“in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form”, v. 9) and the believer’s completeness in Him (v. 10), moves through the circumcision not made with hands (vv. 11–12), the forgiveness of trespasses and the cancellation of the certificate of debt (vv. 13–14), and culminates in the comprehensive victory over the demonic powers announced in verse 15. The victory over the demonic powers is not an incidental appendage to the central argument; it is its culmination and its doxological climax.

The first action Paul describes is the disarming of the rulers and authorities (Greek: *apekdysamenos tas archas kai tas exousias*). The verb *apekdysamenos* means to strip off completely, to divest entirely, to remove the clothing, armor, and weapons of the conquered enemy in an act of total disarmament and humiliation. The rulers and authorities, the same ranked demonic powers against which the believer struggles in Ephesians 6:12, are stripped of the specific weapons through which they exercised their authority over fallen humanity. What were those weapons? Colossians 2:13–14 provides the answer: the record of debt, the certificate of ordinances that stood against humanity, the legal claim of condemnation that the law’s violation produced. The demonic powers’ primary weapon against human beings is the law’s condemnation, the accusation, the sentence, the debt, and at the cross, Christ canceled the certificate of debt (v. 14), nailing it to the cross. In doing so He disarmed the powers that wielded it: they can no longer condemn those for whom Christ has died, because the debt has been paid and the record canceled.

The second action is the public display, the *deigmatismos*, the public spectacle. The imagery is of the Roman military triumph, the celebratory procession through which the victorious general paraded his conquered enemies through the city, stripped of their weapons and armor, before the cheering populace. At the cross, which appeared to be the ultimate triumph of the demonic powers over the Son of God, the demonic powers were in fact publicly displayed in their utter defeat: the One they crucified rose from the dead, and in His resurrection the entire world was shown that the apparent victory of the rulers and authorities was in fact their most catastrophic and most public defeat. The third action is the triumph (Greek: *thriambeusas en autō*), the triumphal march itself, the procession of the Victor who has comprehensively conquered his enemy. The cross is not Christ’s defeat; it is Christ’s triumph. The tomb is not the end of the story; it is the prelude to the coronation.

III. Hebrews 2:14–15: Conquering Death by Dying

The Paradox of the Cross as the Destruction of the Destroyer's Power

Hebrews 2:14–15 describes the cross's defeat of the demonic realm with a paradox of such theological profundity that it deserves to be received slowly and with full attentiveness: "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (NASB 1995). The paradox is stated with absolute clarity: the mechanism by which the devil is rendered powerless is the very mechanism through which his power most comprehensively expressed itself, death. Christ destroyed the power of death by dying. He rendered powerless the one who had the power of death by submitting to that power. He freed those enslaved by the fear of death by entering death Himself and emerging from it victorious.

The Incarnation, on the Hebrews account, was specifically designed to make this paradoxical defeat possible. The Son of God partook of flesh and blood precisely because the weapon He needed to destroy required a body to be destroyed in: He entered the domain of the adversary's most comprehensive power, mortality, physical death, the dissolution of the creature before the corruption of sin, and overcame it from within. The adversary who arranged the crucifixion was, in the most profound and most ironic sense, arranging his own defeat: he brought the sword of death against the One whose death would be the instrument of the sword's destruction.

The specific liberation the Hebrews passage describes is the liberation from the fear of death, the most comprehensive and most universal form of the adversary's power over fallen humanity. The fear of death is not merely the natural aversion to physical dissolution; in Hebrews' account it is the specifically spiritual bondage of those who know that death is not merely the end of biological life but the entrance into the judgment of a God before whom they cannot stand. The adversary wielded the fear of death precisely because fallen humanity had genuine reason to fear it: the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and those who are in Adam stand under the condemnation that makes death genuinely terrible. The cross's liberation from the fear of death is therefore the liberation from the condemnation that made death terrible, the justification that declares the believer righteous before the God they formerly had reason to fear, so that death becomes not the entrance to judgment but the entrance to glory (Philippians 1:21–23).

The pastoral significance of Hebrews 2:14–15 for the church in the present age is immense and urgently relevant. The adversary's most effective present weapon against the church is not primarily the dramatic demonic activity that the preceding lessons have described; it is the fear, the fear of death, the fear of ultimate condemnation, the fear that the gospel's promises are not secure, the fear that sin has placed the believer beyond the reach of the grace that is proclaimed. This is the specific form of the adversary's power that the cross has rendered powerless. The believer who knows that the one who had the power of death has been rendered powerless by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has received the specific liberation from the fear of death that Hebrews 2:14–15 describes, is the believer most effectively freed from the adversary's most comprehensive weapon.

“That through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14, NASB 1995

IV. 1 John 3:8: The Purpose of the Incarnation

The Son of God Appeared for This Purpose: the Destruction of the Devil’s Works

First John 3:8 states the purpose of the entire Incarnation with a doxological directness that requires no elaboration but merits extended meditation: “The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil” (NASB 1995). The verse is embedded in John’s extended reflection on the nature of sin and righteousness (1 John 3:4–10), and its Christological declaration occurs in a specifically ethical context: the Son appeared to destroy the works of the devil, and those who belong to the Son do not practice the sin that is the devil’s characteristic activity. The Christological and the ethical are inseparable: the destruction of the devil’s works is simultaneously the liberation of those who were practicing those works, and the liberation produces the transformed life that no longer lives as though it belongs to the adversary.

The phrase “the works of the devil” encompasses the entire scope of the adversary’s activity that the series has traced across its preceding lessons: the sin he incites, the deception he sponsors, the false religion he directs, the spiritual bondage he maintains, the demonization he produces, the fear of death by which he enslaves, the cultural and national systems of rebellion against God that he animates. All of these are “the works of the devil”, and all of them stand within the scope of what the Son appeared to destroy. The destruction is not yet complete in its final expression: the works of the devil continue in the present age within the divinely permitted limits that the series has consistently described. But the destruction is already accomplished in its decisive, foundational sense: the cross has struck the blow from which the adversary will never recover, and every subsequent manifestation of his works is the activity of a being operating on borrowed time, within borrowed limits, toward an end that has been determined against him before he began.

The cosmic scope of 1 John 3:8’s declaration, the Son appeared to destroy the works of the devil, is one of the most doxologically significant statements about the purpose of the Incarnation in the entire New Testament. It means that the Incarnation was not primarily or exclusively a transaction between God and fallen humanity; it was simultaneously an engagement with the cosmic adversary whose activity has been woven into the fabric of human sin, human suffering, and human rebellion against God from the beginning. When the eternal Son took on human flesh, He entered the domain of the adversary’s most concentrated activity, the fallen human world in which the devil has exercised his influence since Eden, and He came with the specific purpose of destroying everything the adversary has built. The manger leads to the cross; the cross leads to the empty tomb; the empty tomb is the beginning of the end of everything the serpent has done since the garden.

V. John 12:31 and 16:11: The Ruler of This World Judged

Jesus' Own Anticipation of the Cross as the Judgment of the Prince of This World

Two specific statements of Jesus in John's Gospel provide the Lord's own prophetic interpretation of the cross as the judgment of the demonic ruler. The first is John 12:31, spoken by Jesus in the days immediately preceding the passion: "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out" (NASB 1995). The second is John 16:11, within the Upper Room Discourse: "concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged" (NASB 1995). In both passages Jesus uses the present tense (or the perfect tense in 16:11, indicating accomplished action) to describe the judgment of the prince of this world as a present or accomplished reality, not a future aspiration. The cross is, from Jesus' own perspective, the event in which the cosmic ruler of the fallen world system is judged, expelled, and condemned.

The significance of John 12:31's language, "the ruler of this world will be cast out", echoes the language of Revelation 12:9 ("the great dragon was thrown down") and connects the cosmic judgment of the adversary explicitly to the cross event that Jesus is about to enter. The casting out of the ruler of this world is not a future eschatological event awaiting Christ's return; it is the present consequence of the cross toward which Jesus is moving. The adversary who has exercised his authority as the prince of this world system since the fall of humanity is being cast out, stripped of the authority that the human race's sin had granted him, disempowered by the obedience of the Second Adam who undoes what the First Adam did, and expelled from the authority that will now be exercised by the One who has died and risen and sits at the right hand of the Father.

The perfect tense in John 16:11, "the ruler of this world has been judged" (Greek: *kekritai*), is theologically significant: it describes the judgment as a past action with ongoing results. The ruler of this world has already been judged; the judgment stands; it is not subject to appeal or reversal. The present activity of the adversary in the world, real, damaging, and documented throughout this series, is the activity of a being who has already been condemned and is awaiting the execution of his sentence. His present authority is the authority of a ruler who has been deposed but not yet removed from the territory he formerly governed; his present attacks are the attacks of one who knows the execution is coming and who is using the time he has left with the desperation of those who have nothing more to lose. The judgment is certain; the consummation is certain; and the One who spoke these words before the cross is the One who rose from the dead after it.

VI. The Already and the Not Yet: The D-Day/V-Day Analogy

Oscar Cullmann's Most Illuminating Image for the Present State of the Cosmic Conflict

The most practically useful theological image for understanding the present state of the cosmic conflict, the relationship between the decisive victory accomplished at the cross and the continuing reality of the adversary's activity in the present age, comes not from a biblical text but from the vocabulary of mid-

twentieth century history. Oscar Cullmann, the New Testament theologian whose work on redemptive history and the New Testament's eschatological framework has been enormously influential in the Reformed tradition, drew an analogy in his work *Christ and Time* (1946) that has become one of the most widely cited and most illuminating images in the theology of the already and the not yet.

The analogy is to the relationship between D-Day and V-Day in the Second World War. D-Day, June 6, 1944, was the decisive turning point of the war in Europe: the Allied landings at Normandy that established the beachhead from which the liberation of Western Europe would proceed. After D-Day, the outcome of the war was determined; military historians and Allied commanders knew that the ultimate result was no longer in doubt. The decisive battle had been fought and won. But V-Day, Victory Day, May 8, 1945, was nearly a year away, and in the intervening months some of the fiercest and most costly fighting of the entire war took place. The Battle of the Bulge, in December 1944, was the Wehrmacht's most desperate counterattack, furious, destructive, temporarily disorienting to the Allied forces. But the outcome was never genuinely in doubt after D-Day; the Battle of the Bulge was the desperate counterattack of a defeated enemy, not a genuinely uncertain reversal of fortune.

Cullmann's application to the Christ-event is precise and illuminating. D-Day is the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ: the decisive battle in the cosmic conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, in which the outcome of the entire war is determined. The ruler of this world is cast out; the rulers and authorities are disarmed; the one who had the power of death is rendered powerless; the works of the devil are destroyed in principle. The outcome is no longer genuinely in doubt. V-Day is the second coming of Christ: the final public acknowledgment and complete consummation of the victory that D-Day accomplished, when every knee bows and every tongue confesses, when the adversary is cast into the lake of fire, and when the new creation fully arrives. Between D-Day and V-Day, the fighting is real and the casualties are genuine. The adversary's counterattacks, the temptations, the deceptions, the afflictions, the doctrines of demons, the opposition to the gospel, are the Battle of the Bulge of the cosmic conflict: ferocious, costly, temporarily disorienting. But they are the attacks of a defeated enemy, not the attacks of one who has any genuine prospect of reversing the outcome determined at Calvary.

The pastoral significance of the D-Day/V-Day analogy cannot be overstated. It gives the church the specific vocabulary for holding together the two truths that the entire series has been pressing simultaneously: the reality of the ongoing conflict (the fighting is real between D-Day and V-Day) and the certainty of the ultimate victory (the outcome was determined on D-Day). The congregation that has internalized this analogy knows how to interpret the adversary's present activity, not as evidence that D-Day failed or that the outcome is still uncertain, but as the predictable and expected activity of a defeated enemy operating in the interval between his condemnation and its execution. The Battle of the Bulge was fierce; the final result was never genuinely in question. So with the present experience of spiritual conflict: fierce, real, costly, and whose outcome was decided at Calvary.

"The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."

1 John 3:8, NASB 1995

VII. Revelation 12:12: The Fury of the Defeated Enemy

Why the Adversary's Present Intensity Is Evidence of His Defeat, Not His Strength

Revelation 12:12 provides one of the most theologically illuminating verses in the entire series for understanding the character of the adversary's present activity in the light of his decisive defeat at the cross: "Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (NASB 1995). The verse occurs in the context of the great cosmic war of Revelation 12, the expulsion of the dragon from heaven, his defeat by Michael and the angelic host, and the declaration of the heavenly voice that the accuser of the brethren has been cast down, and it provides the interpretive key for understanding the nature and the intensity of the adversary's present activity.

The adversary has "great wrath", his present intensity is genuine, his destructive capacity real, and his ferocity in the present age not to be minimized. But the source and the character of that wrath are specified: he has great wrath because he knows that he has only a short time. The fury is not the fury of a power that has not yet been checked; it is the fury of a power that has already been defeated and knows it. The "short time" of the adversary's remaining operation is not a concession to his continuing strength; it is the measure of the time between his defeat and the execution of his sentence, determined by the sovereign God who has set the appointed time for the consummation.

This Revelation 12:12 framework is one of the most pastorally important interpretive tools the series provides for helping the congregation understand its experience of intense spiritual opposition. The congregation that experiences fierce demonic attack, sustained spiritual pressure, or seasons of intense spiritual warfare is often tempted to interpret the intensity of the opposition as evidence that the adversary is strong, that the victory is in doubt, or that something has gone wrong in the spiritual conflict. The Revelation 12:12 framework interprets the intensity of the opposition differently: the fiercer the adversary's attacks, the more clearly they reflect the desperation of a defeated enemy who knows his time is short. The Battle of the Bulge was most ferocious precisely because the Wehrmacht knew the war was lost. The adversary's most intense attacks are most ferocious precisely because he knows that D-Day has already determined V-Day, and that the time between them is short.

The verse also provides the basis for the Revelation 12 community's joy: "Rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!" The expulsion of the accuser from the heavenly realm, his defeat by the blood of the Lamb and the word of the testimony of the saints (v. 11), is an occasion for the joy of those who know that the cosmic conflict has been decided. The heavenly community rejoices; the earthly community endures with the knowledge of why the adversary rages. Both responses, the heavenly rejoicing and the earthly endurance, are grounded in the same reality: the decisive defeat accomplished at the cross, confirmed in the resurrection, and to be consummated at the appointed return of the One who has already won.

VIII. The Pastoral Assurance: Your Battle's Outcome Has Been Decided

What the Cross's Victory Means for Every Believer in Every Conflict

This lesson concludes with the pastoral assurance that is the most practically significant gift of the entire Unit 7: the battle you fight against temptation, sin, and the schemes of the devil is a battle whose outcome has already been decided. Christ has won, and His victory is yours. Not in some future state of eschatological completion, not in a conditional sense that depends on the quality of your spiritual warfare engagement, not in the provisional sense of a victory that might still be reversed, but now, presently, actually, and unconditionally. The One in whom you stand has already disarmed the rulers and authorities, rendered powerless the one who had the power of death, destroyed the works of the devil, and cast out the ruler of this world. Every one of those verbs is past tense. The accomplishment is complete. The victory is yours.

This assurance does not minimize the genuine reality of the ongoing conflict. The D-Day/V-Day analogy preserves both truths simultaneously: the decisive battle has been won, and the fighting between D-Day and V-Day is real. The adversary's fury in Revelation 12:12 is genuine fury, not a performance. The fiery darts of Ephesians 6:16 are genuinely incendiary, not metaphorical inconveniences. The prowling lion of 1 Peter 5:8 is a genuine predator, not a paper tiger. The spiritual conflict described across the preceding lessons of this series is a genuine conflict that requires the genuine deployment of the genuine resources God has provided. The pastoral assurance is not that the conflict is less real than it appears but that the outcome is more certain than it feels.

The most direct Christological statement of what this victory means for the individual believer is the one Paul provides in Romans 8:37–39: “In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (NASB 1995). The “principalities” and the “powers” of this passage are the demonic rulers whose defeat the cross accomplished, and Paul's declaration is not that they are irrelevant or that the conflict is imaginary, but that none of them, singly or collectively, can accomplish the one thing that would make the adversary's victory real: the separation of the believer from the love of God in Christ. That separation is impossible. The cross has made it impossible. The resurrection has confirmed it impossible. And the promised return and consummation will demonstrate it impossible in the final, comprehensive, permanent way that Revelation 20 and 21–22 describe.

Receive this, then, as the assurance of the One who has won: the conflict is real; the provision is complete; the outcome is certain; the victory is yours. Go into the specific battles of your specific day, the specific temptations, the specific accusations, the specific forms of spiritual pressure that the adversary's wrath produces in your specific life and ministry, with the confidence of those who know that they are engaging not an uncertain conflict whose outcome is still in play but the mopping-up operation of a war already won. Christ has disarmed the powers. He has triumphed over them. He has destroyed their works. He has

rendered their king powerless. The bruised heel has crushed the serpent's head. Stand in that. Fight from that. Live in the certainty of it, with the sobriety of those who know the Battle of the Bulge is real and the confidence of those who know it cannot alter the outcome that D-Day determined. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Protoevangelium	Latin: first gospel. The first proclamation of the coming redemption in Genesis 3:15, spoken by God to the serpent: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” The protoevangelium establishes: (1) the personal character of the adversary (God addresses a personal being); (2) the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent as the theological framework for all subsequent redemptive history; (3) the asymmetry of the bruising (heel wound vs. head crushing) as the anticipation of the cross’s costly victory; and (4) the certainty of the seed of the woman’s final victory over the serpent. The protoevangelium is the beginning of the story whose climax is the cross and whose consummation is Revelation 20:10.
Apekdysamenos	Greek: having stripped off completely, having divested entirely (Colossians 2:15). The participle used to describe Christ’s action toward the rulers and authorities at the cross: He stripped them completely, removed their armor and weapons, and left them utterly disarmed. In the Roman military context, the stripping of conquered enemies’ arms and armor was both a practical measure of disarmament and a humiliating public display of their defeat. Paul uses this image to describe what the cross accomplished vis-à-vis the demonic powers: it removed the specific weapons, the law’s condemnation, the certificate of debt, through which those powers maintained their authority over fallen humanity.
Triumphal Procession (Thriambeuein)	Greek: to lead in a triumphal procession, to triumph over (Colossians 2:15). The Roman military triumph was a celebratory procession through the city in which the victorious general paraded his conquered enemies, stripped of their arms, bound, and publicly humiliated, before the cheering populace. Paul uses this image for what Christ accomplished at the cross and resurrection: the demonic rulers and authorities, who appeared to triumph at the crucifixion, were in fact publicly displayed in their defeat at the resurrection. The cross that appeared to be the greatest triumph of the adversary was in fact the most comprehensive and most public demonstration of the adversary’s total defeat.
D-Day / V-Day Analogy	Oscar Cullmann’s analogy (from <i>Christ and Time</i> , 1946) for the relationship between the decisive victory accomplished at the cross and the final eschatological consummation. D-Day (June 6, 1944, the Normandy landings) = the cross and resurrection: the decisive battle that determined the outcome of the war. V-Day (May 8, 1945, Victory Day) = the second coming and final judgment: the public acknowledgment and complete consummation of the victory D-Day accomplished. Between D-Day and V-Day, the fighting is real (the

Term	Definition
	Battle of the Bulge was genuine and fierce), but the outcome was never genuinely in doubt. Applied to the cosmic conflict: the cross is D-Day, the second coming is V-Day, and the adversary's present attacks are the Battle of the Bulge, fierce, desperate, and unable to reverse the outcome D-Day determined.
Already / Not Yet	The theological framework for understanding the eschatological tension in New Testament redemption: certain realities of the age to come have already been inaugurated in the present age (the "already"), while their complete fulfillment awaits the consummation (the "not yet"). Applied to the defeat of Satan: Satan has already been defeated at the cross (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; John 12:31; 16:11), and this defeat is a present, objective, accomplished reality. Satan's final destruction has not yet been executed (it awaits Revelation 20:10). The already grounds the church's confident resistance; the not yet explains the reality of the ongoing conflict.
Kekritai	Greek: has been judged (perfect passive indicative, John 16:11). The perfect tense indicates a past action with ongoing results: "the ruler of this world has been judged." The judgment of the adversary was accomplished at the cross and resurrection; it is not pending but rendered; it is not provisional but final. The adversary's present activity is the activity of a being who has already been judged and whose sentence of execution is appointed. The perfect tense is theologically significant: it establishes the judgment as an accomplished, standing reality rather than a future aspiration, grounding the believer's confidence in the present certainty of the adversary's condemnation.
The Power of Death (Kratos Tou Thanatou)	Greek: the strength or dominion of death. The specific weapon through which the devil exercised his authority over fallen humanity, according to Hebrews 2:14. The power of death encompasses: (1) physical death as the consequence of sin (Romans 6:23); (2) the fear of death as a form of lifelong spiritual slavery (Hebrews 2:15); and (3) the law's condemnation that made death genuinely fearful, the knowledge that death led to judgment before a God whose righteous standards fallen humanity could not meet. Christ rendered this power powerless through His own death and resurrection: He entered the domain of death and emerged victorious, bearing in Himself the condemnation that made death fearful so that those who belong to Him no longer need to fear it.
The Works of the Devil (Ta Erga Tou Diabolou)	The comprehensive scope of the adversary's activity in the fallen world, whose destruction is stated as the specific purpose of the Incarnation in 1 John 3:8. The works of the devil encompass the full range of demonic activity described throughout this series: the sin incited through temptation, the deception through false teaching, the false religion organized around idol worship, the

Term	Definition
	physical and spiritual oppression of human beings, the demonization of specific individuals, the cultural and national systems of rebellion against God, and the fear of death that enslaves fallen humanity. All of these works stand within the scope of what the Son appeared to destroy. The destruction is already accomplished in principle at the cross; it will be consummated at the second coming and final judgment.
Revelation 12:12 Principle	The theological insight derived from Revelation 12:12 (“the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time”) that the intensity of the adversary’s present attacks is evidence of his defeat rather than his strength. The adversary’s great wrath is the wrath of a defeated enemy who knows his time is short, the equivalent of the Wehrmacht’s Battle of the Bulge, the most ferocious counterattack of a military power that had already lost the decisive battle. Applied pastorally: intense spiritual opposition is not evidence that the spiritual conflict is going badly for God’s people; it is evidence that the adversary is operating in his most desperate mode, pressing hardest precisely because he knows the time remaining to him is limited.
Seed of the Woman / Seed of the Serpent	The two bloodlines of cosmic conflict established in Genesis 3:15: the seed of the woman (the line from Eve through which the promised Deliverer would come, culminating in Jesus Christ as the ultimate seed of the woman, Galatians 3:16) and the seed of the serpent (those who share the adversary’s character and serve his purposes, including his human instruments and his demonic servants, as in John 8:44). The entire redemptive history of the Old Testament traces the conflict between these two seeds, Cain and Abel, the Nephilim, Pharaoh and Moses, the Canaanite gods and Israel, the successive empires and the people of God, toward the decisive encounter at Calvary where the seed of the woman bruised the serpent’s head.

Practical Application

A. For the Mind: What Must We Believe?

We must believe that the cross of Jesus Christ was not merely the atonement for human sin, though it is that comprehensively and sufficiently, but simultaneously the decisive defeat of the personal cosmic adversary who has opposed God and afflicted God's people since Eden. This dual understanding of the cross is not a secondary theological refinement; it is essential to the biblical presentation of what the cross accomplished. The One who died was not merely the sacrifice for sin; He was the seed of the woman crushing the serpent's head, the Victor stripping the rulers and authorities of their weapons, the conqueror rendering powerless the one who had the power of death, the Son who appeared specifically to destroy the works of the devil. To receive the cross without its demonological dimension is to receive a diminished cross.

We must also believe that the D-Day/V-Day framework is theologically precise and pastorally essential, not because the military analogy is perfect but because it captures the specific tension that the biblical testimony requires us to hold: the decisive battle has been won (the fighting is real, the outcome is determined) while the final consummation has not yet arrived (the fighting continues, but the adversary cannot reverse D-Day). The believer who has internalized this framework is protected from both the complacency that forgets D-Day happened and the anxiety that forgets V-Day is certain.

B. For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?

Let the cross's victory produce the specific doxological response that the New Testament consistently commends: the joy of those who have seen the Victor crowned and know how the story ends. The heavenly community of Revelation 12:12 rejoices at the expulsion of the accuser; the earthly community endures with the knowledge that the adversary's fury is the fury of a defeated enemy. Both responses are appropriate; both are grounded in the same reality. The appropriate emotional register for the Christian soldier between D-Day and V-Day is not the grim determination of those who do not know the outcome but the confident, worshipping endurance of those who do. The Battle of the Bulge was fierce; the Allied soldiers who had been at Normandy knew that it could not undo D-Day. Endure with that knowledge. Worship with that knowledge.

Desire the specific form of Christological consciousness that transforms the experience of spiritual opposition. The believer who experiences fierce spiritual attack and interprets it through the Revelation 12:12 lens, "this intensity is the fury of a defeated enemy who knows his time is short", experiences that attack differently than the believer who experiences the same intensity without the interpretive framework. The framework does not make the attack less real; it makes the attack less disorienting. It restores the ground of confident resistance by locating the intensity of the opposition within the narrative of the adversary's defeat rather than within the narrative of the adversary's unchecked power.

C. For the Hands: What Must We Do?

- **Read Colossians 2:9–15 as a complete Christological-soteriological argument, tracing the logic from Christ’s comprehensive deity (v. 9) through the believer’s completeness in Him (v. 10) through the forgiveness and cancellation of the debt (vv. 13–14) to the triumph over the powers (v. 15).** Identify the specific connection between the cancellation of the certificate of debt (v. 14) and the disarming of the rulers and authorities (v. 15). What is the relationship between the atonement for sin and the defeat of the demonic powers? And how does this connection illuminate the specific form of the adversary’s primary weapon (the law’s condemnation) and the specific mechanism of its removal (the cross’s atonement)?
- **Preach or teach a sermon on the protoevangelium of Genesis 3:14–15, connecting it to its fulfillment in the cross and its consummation in Revelation 20.** The sermon arc is the entire redemptive history of the cosmic conflict: the promise made in the garden, the conflict traced through the Old Testament in the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the decisive fulfillment at Calvary where the heel was bruised and the head was crushed, and the consummation at the second coming when the crushing is acknowledged by every knee bowing and every tongue confessing. This sermon arc is the entire Angelology series in miniature, and it is among the most comprehensive and most doxologically moving presentations of the gospel available to the preacher.
- **Read Oscar Cullmann’s *Christ and Time* (1946) or *Salvation in History* (1967),** in which the D-Day/V-Day analogy and the broader framework of redemptive history’s eschatological structure are developed. Cullmann’s theology is not without its critics from the Reformed perspective, but his contribution to the theology of the already and the not yet, and specifically the D-Day/V-Day analogy for the relationship between the cross and the consummation, remains one of the most practically illuminating frameworks in twentieth-century New Testament theology. Reading Cullmann in light of this lesson will deepen the pastoral application of the already/not yet framework for the congregation.
- **Develop a brief devotional guide for your congregation based on the five key texts of this lesson: Genesis 3:15, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14–15, 1 John 3:8, and Revelation 12:12.** For each text, provide: (1) a brief exegetical comment that illuminates the specific dimension of the cross’s victory it describes; (2) a specific pastoral application to the ordinary experience of spiritual conflict; and (3) a brief prayer that receives the specific assurance the text provides. The goal is to equip the congregation to draw, in the moment of spiritual conflict, on the specific scriptural resource that most directly addresses the specific form of the adversary’s attack they are experiencing.
- **Memorize the five key action verbs of the cross’s victory in their scriptural contexts: disarmed (Colossians 2:15), rendered powerless (Hebrews 2:14), destroy (1 John 3:8), cast out (John 12:31), judged (John 16:11).** These five verbs are the apostolic and dominical vocabulary for what the cross accomplished in relation to the demonic realm, and they are the specific scriptural resources for the moments when the adversary’s attacks suggest that the victory is less certain than it is. Bring the specific verb to the specific attack: when the adversary accuses, “he has been judged” (John 16:11); when the adversary threatens, “his works are being destroyed” (1 John 3:8); when the adversary presses the fear of death, “he has been rendered

powerless” (Hebrews 2:14); when the adversary claims authority over your circumstances, “he has been disarmed” (Colossians 2:15).

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Before working through the discussion questions, identify which of the five primary texts of this lesson, Genesis 3:15, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14–15, 1 John 3:8, or Revelation 12:12, has most immediately and most specifically addressed a specific form of spiritual conflict or spiritual discouragement in your own life. What is the specific dimension of the cross's victory that text describes, and how does that specific dimension speak to your specific situation?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Genesis 3:14–15 in its context (vv. 8–19 for the full divine response to the fall). What is God addressing in verse 14 (the serpent's physical form)? What is the enmity He establishes in verse 15a (between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed)? What are the two bruising described in verse 15b, and what does the specific location of each, head vs. heel, suggest about the nature of the victory and its cost? And how does Paul's language in Romans 16:20 "Soon crush Satan under your feet" connect to and extend the Genesis 3:15 language?
- Read Colossians 2:9–15 as a complete unit. Identify the specific actions Paul describes in verse 15, what are the three distinct actions, and what is the sequence? What is the specific connection between the cancellation of the certificate of debt in verse 14 and the disarming in verse 15? What does the vocabulary of the triumphal procession communicate about the public and comprehensive character of the defeat? And how does the phrase "having triumphed over them through Him" ("en autō", or "in it", referring to the cross itself) identify the cross as the specific instrument of triumph?
- Read Hebrews 2:5–18 as a complete unit for context. What is the immediate context of verses 14–15, what argument is Hebrews making about the Incarnation in verses 5–13? Why did the Son specifically need to partake of flesh and blood (v. 14a), and what was the specific purpose of that participation (v. 14b)? What is the "fear of death" from which the cross's liberation frees human beings (v. 15), and why is that fear described as "lifelong slavery"? And how does the high priestly vocation of verses 17–18 connect to the liberation from the fear of death in verses 14–15?
- Read Revelation 12:7–12 carefully. What is the sequence of events: the war in heaven (vv. 7–8), the outcome (v. 9), and the heavenly voice's declaration (vv. 10–12)? What is the basis of the brothers' victory over the accuser (v. 11, identify each element)? What is the emotional response in heaven (v. 12a) and what is the woe to the earth (v. 12b)? And how does the phrase "knowing that he has only a short time" characterize the adversary's present activity as the activity of one who is already defeated?
- Read John 12:27–32 and 16:8–11 together. What is the context of Jesus' statement about the ruler of this world in each passage? How does the present tense in 12:31 ("the ruler of this world will be cast out", pointing to the imminent cross) relate to the perfect tense in 16:11 ("has

been judged”, describing the accomplished judgment)? And what does the statement “I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” (12:32) contribute to the understanding of the cross as the event that simultaneously judges the ruler of this world and draws all people to the Savior?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson argues that the cross accomplished the defeat of the demonic realm through the specific mechanism of the atonement: the cancellation of the certificate of debt (Colossians 2:14) removed the specific weapon, the law’s condemnation, through which the adversary exercised his authority over fallen humanity. Is this the right way to understand the connection between the atonement and the defeat of the demonic powers? Are there other dimensions of the cross’s defeat of the demonic realm that this specifically penal-substitutionary account does not fully capture?
- Hebrews 2:14–15 describes the cross’s liberation from the “fear of death” as the specific form of the adversary’s power that the cross overcame. Is the fear of death still the adversary’s most effective weapon in the contemporary church’s experience? What forms does the fear of death take in a contemporary Western context that may be different from the fear of death in the first-century context to which Hebrews was written? And how does the cross’s liberation from the fear of death speak to the specific forms the fear takes in your congregation’s experience?
- The lesson presents the D-Day/V-Day analogy as the most practically useful framework for holding together the already and the not yet of the adversary’s defeat. What are the strengths of this analogy, what does it capture about the nature of the conflict and the certainty of the outcome that other frameworks do not? What are its limitations, where does the analogy break down or potentially mislead? And how does the biblical itself account for the tension between the already of the adversary’s defeat and the not yet of his final destruction, what images or frameworks does it provide?
- The lesson interprets Revelation 12:12’s “great wrath” as the fury of a defeated enemy rather than as evidence of undiminished strength. Is this interpretation consistent with the broader context of Revelation 12? And does this interpretive move, interpreting the intensity of opposition as evidence of defeat rather than strength, have a basis beyond the Revelation 12:12 passage itself? How does the broader biblical theology of the cosmic conflict support or qualify this interpretation?
- First John 3:8 states that the Son appeared specifically to destroy the works of the devil. How does this statement change the way we understand the scope and purpose of the Incarnation? Does it suggest that the Incarnation was primarily aimed at the demonic realm, or does it add a dimension to an atonement that is primarily oriented toward the reconciliation of fallen human beings with God? And how does the ethical context of 1 John 3:4–10 (those who belong to Christ do not practice the sin that is the devil’s characteristic activity) illuminate the relationship between the cosmic victory over the adversary and the personal sanctification that is its fruit?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- The lesson describes the appropriate emotional register for the Christian soldier between D-Day and V-Day as “the confident, worshipping endurance of those who know the outcome.” Evaluate your own current emotional register in the specific spiritual conflicts you are presently engaged in. Are you enduring with the confidence of those who know D-Day has already happened? Or are you experiencing the anxiety of those who are still uncertain whether the right side will win? What specific truth from this lesson, which specific verb of the cross’s victory, most directly addresses the specific form of your spiritual uncertainty or discouragement?
- The lesson argues that the Revelation 12:12 principle, the adversary’s fury is the fury of a defeated enemy who knows his time is short, is one of the most pastorally important interpretive tools for helping the congregation understand its experience of intense spiritual opposition. Has there been a specific season in your ministry or personal spiritual life when the intensity of spiritual opposition felt most overwhelming? In retrospect, how does the Revelation 12:12 framework reinterpret that season? And how would you communicate this interpretive framework to a member of your congregation who is presently in the most intense spiritual conflict of their life?
- The lesson provides five key action verbs of the cross’s victory and recommends deploying them in the specific moments of specific attacks: “judged” against accusation, “destroyed” against the adversary’s works, “rendered powerless” against the fear of death, “disarmed” against the adversary’s claimed authority. Which of these five verbs do you most need to deploy more deliberately in your specific spiritual conflicts right now? And what specific practice, memorization, morning declaration, regular use in prayer, would most help you bring the specific verb to the specific attack in the moment when the interpretive framework is most needed?
- The protoevangelium of Genesis 3:15 frames the entire redemptive history as the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. How does this framing change the way you preach the Old Testament? Identify a specific Old Testament narrative, from the Patriarchs, the Exodus, the Monarchy, or the Prophets, in which the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is visible. And how does seeing the Old Testament through the lens of Genesis 3:15 enrich the preaching of that narrative by connecting it to the larger redemptive-historical arc that culminates in the cross?
- Lesson 19 will address the final judgment of Satan and his angels, the lake of fire, the eternal destiny of the demonic realm, and the theological significance of the certainty of that destiny. As you prepare to engage the final judgment, what is the single most important truth from this lesson about the cross’s victory that you most want to carry into the lesson on the consummation? And how has the cumulative teaching of Unit 7 so far, the decisive victory already accomplished at the cross, prepared you to receive the final judgment as the completion of what Calvary began rather than as a separate and unrelated event?

Prayer Focus

Open this lesson's prayer time with a reading of the five primary texts in sequence: Genesis 3:15, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14–15, 1 John 3:8, and Revelation 12:12. Read them not as a list of doctrinal propositions but as a narrative, the narrative of a promise made, a conflict engaged, a victory accomplished, a purpose fulfilled, and a present fury that is evidence of approaching defeat. Allow the arc of that narrative to become the arc of the prayer: from the promise of the protoevangelium through the accomplished triumph of the cross to the certain consummation of the not yet. The prayer that follows these five texts is the prayer of those who know how the story ends.

Begin with adoration at the cross. Not the generic adoration that thanks God for blessings received, but the specific, demonologically-informed adoration of those who know that Calvary is simultaneously the moment of the deepest human sin (the murder of the Son of God) and the most comprehensive divine victory (the disarming of every demonic power, the rendering powerless of the one who had the power of death, the destruction of the adversary's works, the casting out of the ruler of this world). Worship the God of the cross not only for what it accomplished in your justification but for what it accomplished in the cosmic conflict: the serpent's head was crushed in the moment the heel was bruised. The death that appeared to be the adversary's triumph was in fact his most complete and most public defeat. Let that truth produce the specific form of adoration that it is designed to produce: awe at the comprehensive wisdom of a God who used the adversary's most calculated assault as the instrument of the adversary's most decisive defeat.

Give thanks specifically for the liberation from the fear of death that Hebrews 2:14–15 describes. Name the specific forms in which the fear of death has appeared in your own life: the fear of physical death, the fear of judgment, the fear that your sins are too severe for the grace of the gospel, the fear that the adversary's accusations against you will prove to have been correct at the final accounting. Bring each form of the fear before the God who has rendered powerless the one who had the power of death, and receive the specific liberation that the text promises: "That through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." You are freed. The slavery is over. The fear need not hold you.

Intercede for those in your congregation who are most intensely engaged in the spiritual conflict at this moment, for those who are experiencing the adversary's great wrath and interpreting it as evidence of his undiminished strength rather than his desperate defeat. Pray that the Revelation 12:12 framework would become their interpretive lens: that they would see the intensity of the opposition as the fury of a defeated enemy who knows his time is short, rather than as the unchallenged power of an adversary who has the upper hand. Pray that the D-Day truth would ground their experience of the ongoing conflict: that they would know, even in the Battle of the Bulge of their specific spiritual struggle, that D-Day has already determined the outcome and that V-Day is certain.

Close with a declaration of the five verbs of the cross's victory, not as a formula but as a profession of faith and a specific act of resistance: the rulers and authorities have been disarmed; the one who had the power of death has been rendered powerless; the works of the devil are being destroyed; the ruler of this world has been cast out; the ruler of this world has been judged. Speak these declarations not into the air in the direction of the adversary but upward, in gratitude and worship, toward the God who accomplished each one at Calvary. This is the prayer of those who know that D-Day has already happened, who are living in the time between D-Day and V-Day, and who are awaiting the final crushing of the serpent's head under their feet, the crushing that the God of peace has promised will come soon.

“When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”

Colossians 2:15, NASB 1995

Key Texts: *Genesis 3:14–15; Romans 16:20; Colossians 2:9–15; Hebrews 2:5–18; 1 John 3:4–10; Revelation 12:7–12; John 12:27–32; 16:8–11; Romans 8:37–39; Philippians 1:21–23*

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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