

TakeFive

Biblical insights for the week of July 29-August 2, 2019
written by Tony Clark

Monday — Revelation 13:11-14

Sometimes the things that look pure, innocent, or enticing are the things that are farthest from what God wants for us. We might be convinced that a job, friendship, or behavior in our lives is what God wants for us; but, in reality, it's Satan trying to pull us away from the Lord's desire for our life.

There are few places in the Bible where this is demonstrated more clearly than in Revelation 13:11-14 when the antichrist (or the "third beast") is trying to deceive the people of the earth. If those are the tactics that Satan will use in his final attempt to thwart God's plan, why wouldn't he be trying to use those same tactics now?

If we can recognize the difference between what God actually has to say about our lives and what may sound like God but is really deception, then we will be able to stand firm in our faith when things get tough.

For Today: Think about all of the good things that you have in your life. Are those things bringing you closer to God or replacing God in your life?

Tuesday — Revelation 12:7 -17

In this passage, four tactics of Satan are revealed.

- He fights (Rev. 12:7) - He actively engages in trying to take down the angels, and he fights with God for control of their hearts.
- He accuses (Rev. 12:9-10) - He is known as the accuser, and tries to accuse the people of their sin.
- He pursues (Rev. 12:13) - He doesn't stop if he fails to cause someone to sin; he's persistent.
- He waits (Rev. 12:17) - He stands on the sand of the sea waiting for his next opportunity to strike.

The same tactics that Satan uses in this passage are the same ones that he uses in our lives. In order for us to stand firm against his schemes, our first step is to recognize them. Read tomorrow's Take 5 to see what characteristics of Jesus are revealed in this passage as well.

For Today: How have you seen those four characteristics of Satan show up in the ways he tries to tempt you?

Wednesday — Revelation 12:11

From the beginning of time and until the end of time, Satan knows the very thing that will defeat him. Revelation 12:11 says, "And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."

If you were to write this verse about your life, and it said, (your name) **conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of his/her testimony, for (your name) loved not his/her life even unto death,** would it be true?

For Today: What's holding you back from that verse being completely true in your life?

Thursday — Revelation 12:14-20

Did you know that if you're a follower of Jesus, you're hated? Satan hates you because he hates God. Satan hates that he can't do anything to outsmart God. He hates that God is at work in this world, and he hates that the work of Jesus on the cross means that he will never be able to defeat God.

What this means for our world today is that if you're a Christian, you should feel opposition. Opposition is often seen as something to avoid, but as Christians, we should see opposition as an opportunity to step further and further into God's plan for our lives.

For Today: What's one way you've been avoiding opposition for your faith that you need to address?

Friday — Revelation 13:15-18

If I were to ask you what is the most important thing in your life, what would you say? If I were to ask your friends what they think the most important thing in your life is, what do you think they would say?

The way that we act and the things that we value serve as a *mark* to the rest of the world about who we are and what we value. In Revelation 13, the writer talks about "the mark of the beast" that is given to all those on earth so that they may participate in everyday activities. This *mark* will signify that those people are worshipping the beast or something else in the world rather than Jesus. I know that there will come a day when that becomes a reality. However, I'm convinced that there are a lot of people in the world who are already *marked* by their jobs, their lifestyle, or their attitude. It reveals what they worship without being *marked* by the beast.

For Today: If people were to say you're *marked* by one thing, would it be Jesus, or does something else have priority in your heart?