

MISSION UPDATE

AUGUST 2016

REDEMPTION FROM DECEPTION

BY JAMES RAFFERTY

REVELATION 12, THE CENTERPIECE of the book, uncovers a central issue for Planet Earth—redemption from deception.


Deception began in heaven, not on earth, with the dragon who hoodwinked the third part of the angels in heaven with his tail or “lies” (Revelation 12:4; Isaiah 9:15). Deception number two is the old story of the Fall found in the symbolic words “woman” and “serpent,” which takes us back to Eden when the first woman, Eve, was deceived by the serpent, and with Adam, lost their place in paradise (Revelation 12:1, 9). Revelation 12 also describes the symbolic imagery of the “woman” giving birth to the “man-child” Messiah. This woman represents the Jewish church to which Jesus was born. The Jewish church leaders became the next victims of Satan’s deception by rejecting Messiah, thus losing her place as God’s favored people and giving way to the Christian wilderness church (verses 1, 5-6). And finally the entire earth, like the fallen angels, like the first woman Eve, like the Jewish “woman” Israel, will be deceived into rejecting the full and free reality of salvation through the blood of the Lamb (verses 9, 11).

What is the good news in all of this deception outlined so prophetically and succinctly in Revelation 12? Simply this:

“So the great dragon was cast out . . .” (Revelation 12:9).

The thought is not only appealingly good news, but it actually forms the very center point of the book with an equal number of words before and behind it (at least in the English KJV, and some have suggested also in the Greek). The point being that central to the issue of deception is the plan of redemption. We might add not just central, but taking hold of and conquering deception, for just as soon as Satan is cast out of heaven to this earth the “Man-Child” pursues him here, conquers him at Calvary, and then casts him down permanently:

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down’” (Revelation 12:10).

Alleluia! You are now invited to join the loud voice. Let its cry in heaven echo on earth. Let your heart feel its liberating pulse and stir your entire being to burst forth in strong proclamation! The accuser is cast down. The devouring lion has been conquered by the suffering Lamb! Amen. 



IT TAKES TIME

BY DAVID ASSCHERICK

DISCIPLESHIP IS A BIT of a buzzword right now, and that's a good thing. As the church, and as followers of Jesus, we *should* be talking about discipleship. More than this, we should be *doing* discipleship.

But right there is the rub.

Because discipling people is hard. It takes time. It takes investment. It takes energy. It takes sacrifice. It takes wisdom. And did I mention time?

Here's a confession: I spent years as a full-time evangelist (that's not the confession part) bemoaning (here's the confession part) the failure of many local churches to really

disciple and grow their newly-baptized members who had been won through the series I (or some other evangelist) had just held.

The funny (and sad!) thing is that I've heard pastor after pastor complain that, really, it's the evangelist's fault that newly-baptized people don't stick around. "They were baptized too soon." "They weren't adequately prepared." "They should've been cleared more thoroughly." And on and on.

So the evangelists blame the churches and pastors and the pastors blame the evangelists. I've seen this sequence dozens of times and heard it repeated by others (on both sides) more times than I care to remember.

And here's the truth: blaming is easy, but *discipleship is hard*. My head elder is in the room as I'm writing this, so I decided to read him what I'd written so far. He listened, then gave it a moment of thought and said: "It's definitely the evangelist's fault." So, yeah, there you have it.

It is impossible to fully disciple someone in four to six weeks. Not going to happen. Generally, modern evangelistic meetings last about that long. And, yes, all the doctrines may be covered more or less. And, yes, powerful and moving appeals have been made. But these do not constitute

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discipleship. They can get people on the path to being a disciple of Jesus, but these short-term successes can never take the place of the time, energy, and investment that genuine discipleship requires.

Perhaps more than any other verses in the New Testament, Mark 3:14-15 speaks to the essence of discipleship: “Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.”

Did you see it? If not, read it again. Read it until you get it, I’ll wait . . .

Waiting

Still waiting

So you saw it, right? Of course you did. Here it is: “that they might be *with* Him.” That’s it right there! The secret to true discipleship, as Jesus both understood and modeled, is to be *with* those you are endeavoring to disciple. At the risk of repeating myself: it takes time, investment, energy, sacrifice, and wisdom.

And it’s hard. I think I mentioned that already.

Why is it so hard? The short version is that people are messy and complicated. Not all people, just 99% of them. It’s one thing to say, “Happy Sabbath” while walking past someone in church, but it is an entirely different thing to really disciple and invest in another human being. And don’t miss this: the pastor cannot single-handedly disciple a whole church. Even Jesus, who was God incarnate, limited Himself to 12 primary disciples.

Presently, I find myself pastoring a church with between 400-500 on Sabbath morning. About 350 of those are members. Shortly after my arrival here two years ago, it became inescapably evident to me that, when it came to discipleship, I was in over my head. Way over.

So what’s the solution? The answer, I believe, is to create a *culture of discipleship* in the local church. For most churches, this will involve a complete reorientation of the church’s status quo. It centers on small groups and social connections. It prioritizes relationships and time, not just inspiring Sabbath-morning sermons and fiery short-term evangelistic meetings.

Here at Kingscliff, we’ve not figured it all out yet. Probably your church hasn’t yet either. But we’re trying, and I hope you and your church are trying too. This isn’t the pastor’s problem or the evangelist’s problem. This is the church’s opportunity and mission. It is *your* opportunity and mission!

And the essence of that mission is to spend *time* with others. Time praying, time studying, time laughing, time playing, time teaching, time eating, time crying, time witnessing, time crying, and time growing.

That is, time *discipling*.

Just like Jesus. 



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SPEAKING SCHEDULE

AUGUST 13, 27

Cascade Adventist Church
Bend, OR

www.cascadesda.org / 541.749.9005
James Rafferty

SEPTEMBER 10, 24

Cascade Adventist Church
Bend, OR

www.cascadesda.org / 541.749.9005
James Rafferty

SEPTEMBER 20-22

Andrews University
Berrien Springs, MI
www.andrews.edu
Ty Gibson

AUGUST 23-NOVEMBER 19

ARISE 2016

Jasper, OR

lightbearers.org/arise/ / 541.988.3333

Ty Gibson, James Rafferty, David
Asscherick, and more!

SEPTEMBER 16-17

Iowa-Missouri Women's Retreat

Kansas City, MO

www.imsda.org / 515.223.1197

Risë Rafferty

see more events at lightbearers.org

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