

REVELATION 12:7-17

This evening, we continue with Revelation 12:7 through to 17.

REVELATION 12:7-9

⁷ And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

⁸ And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7–9)

A. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, (12:7a)

The word “war” [Gk: *polemos*] is also translated “battle” (1 Cor. 14:8; Rev. 9:7, 9), and “fight” (Heb. 11:34). In the New Testament, it is often used to denote armed conflict (see Matt. 24:6). Here, however, “war” refers to the hostile activity carried on by demonic forces (Rev. 9:7, 9; 11:7; 12:7). The war in heaven is not one waged with weapons.

B. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, (Revelation 12:7b)

In verse 7, the heavenly battle was fought between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels.

- “Michael” means “Who is like God?” and he wages war against the red dragon who aspires to be like God (Isa. 14:12-14).
- Michael is also mentioned in the Old Testament as a prince and protector of God’s people (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1).
- Michael is an “archangel” who fought with the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 9).

C. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. (Revelation 12:8)

Michael and his angel were victorious, and the dragon and his angels could not retain their place in heaven.

In Revelation 12:10, Satan, prior to his being cast out of heaven, was described as “accuser of our brethren...which accused them before our God day and night” (12:10). Satan is not alone in his opposition to the saints entering heaven. He employed fallen angels to work for him, and God in His providence allowed it (see 1 Kings 22:17-23).

Since the finished work of our Lord Jesus on the cross, Satan with his angels have lost their place in heaven and are restricted to a place on earth. Our Lord Jesus' entry into heaven made it impossible for Satan to come before God to accuse the saints. Jesus assumed the role of the advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1; Rom. 8:34; Jude 9).

Satan and his angels had to acknowledge their defeat and the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ when He ascended to the throne (12:5). The irony is this – that while the dragon tried to kill the woman's child, she fled to a place prepared by God for her (12:5), and yet in the pursuit of the child's death, there was not a place for the devil in heaven (12:8).

D. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7–9)

The phrase “cast out” or “cast down” was used five times in Revelation 12 (12:9, 10, 13). The phrase is often used in the context of defeat and judgment (Matt. 5:25; Luke 12:58; Acts

E. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7–9)

John uses several names to identify Satan – great dragon, old serpent, Devil, Satan, and Deceiver.

- The great dragon. This title speaks of because of his enormous power. He gives his power, throne, and authority to the beast that rises up out of the sea (13:1-2).
- The old serpent. This is an allusion to his role as the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-4). The description “the old serpent” indicates that the confrontation between the dragon and the pregnant woman (12:4) dates back to the time of Eve.

John uses the term serpent as a synonym for dragon. “Serpent” appears five times in Revelation (9:19; 12:9, 14, 15; 20:2). Paul also uses the word “serpent” to warn the church not to be led astray to depart from Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).

- The devil. The Greek word is *diabolos*. The word is translated “false accuser” (2 Tim. 3:3; Titus 2:3). The devil accuses, slanders, brings false charges, and misrepresents. The Bible also warns the believers to resist the devil, and not to give place to him (James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; Eph. 4:27; 6:11).
- Satan. In Hebrew, the word is also translated “adversary” (2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Sam 19:4). The devil is appropriately called Satan because he is at enmity with God and all those who serve and worship him.

The deceiver. John describes the devil as the one who “deceiveth the whole world” (12:9). The word “world” [Gk: *oikoumenēn*] refers to the whole inhabited earth, which is inhabited by humans; the same area to which our Lord Jesus commanded the Gospel to be preached.

The Apostle Paul describes the *modus operandi* of the devil. Paul says that Satan will blind “the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:4)

His first target of deception was Eve (Gen. 3:4-5; 2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Tim. 2:14), and he has been at work deceiving nations all through history. He is the father of lies, there is no truth in him (John 8:44).

His ultimate deceiving tool at the time of the end is the False Prophet who will perform great signs to deceive those who dwell on the earth (13:13-14).

REVELATION 12:10-12

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

¹² Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12:10–12)

- A. **And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:10)**

Although John does not identify the speaker, we can conjecture that the voice could not have been that of angels. Angels do praise God, but the use of the first person pronoun – “our” – and “brethren” suggests that the speakers could not have been angels. Therefore, the voice most likely belongs to believers in heaven singing this song of victory.

- B. **And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:10)**

The hymn begins with a time reference – “now.” “Now” does not refer to a specific time and date. It is used here to mark a division in history, namely, the victory of Christ over Satan. This hymn anticipates the final overthrow of Satan.

The hymn exalts God as the Author of our salvation accomplished through the power of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

The word “strength” [Gk: *dunamis*] means “power.” The word “power” [Gk: *exousia*] is better translated “warranted authority.”

The hymn also deliberately refers to our Lord Jesus as “His Christ” – the Christ of God. This is an allusion to Psalm 2:2.

C. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:10)

“The accuser of our brethren” is Satan. Accusing the brethren is the devil’s activity (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-5). What are Satan’s accusations against Job? Insincerity. Hypocrisy. These are also the most common charges that Christians laid against others. Satan’s work is accusing the brethren. You know, when Christians engage in false accusations, they are also doing the work of the devil.

In verse 10, we read that Satan’s work is now over because our Lord Jesus is our Advocate and our intercessor (Rom. 8:33-34). Even though Satan has been defeated and can no longer accuse the believers before God’s throne, he continues his attacks against Christians day and night. He does so by first enticing a person to sin. If that is successful, Satan will taunt the sinner with accusations. He does this also by torturing the Christian’s conscience.

D. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:11)

In verse 11, John gives us the reason for the victory over Satan. By “they,” John was referring to all of God’s redeemed people in time past, present, and future. Yet the grounds for redemption are the same. Three things are mentioned here.

- The blood of the Lamb (see 7:14). It is the blood of the Lamb that gives believers victory over sin and Satan. Here, the “blood” refers to the blood that is shed by our Lord Jesus for our redemption.
- The word of their testimony. This phrase “the word of their testimony” is the Gospel. They received the gospel and passed it on; so that the Gospel became the Word of their testimony on behalf of Jesus.
- They loved not their lives unto the death. That believers did not value their lives above the Gospel is evidence of their faith in God and their commitment to the Gospel. For the sake of the Gospel, they were willing to offer their lives for the line (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; John 12:25; Acts 20:24; Phil. 2:30; Rom. 16:3-4).

E. **Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12:12)**

The word “therefore” links verse 12 to the preceding verses, to the call of praise (12:10). Delivered from the accuser of the brethren, the heavens are called to rejoice. Such rejoicing is also prophesied in the Old Testament (Isa. 44:23; Ps. 96:11-13).

The heavens are to rejoice, as are those who dwell in the heavens. Who are the “they”? The word “dwell” [Gk: *skēnountes*], which is derived from the word “tabernacle.” Those who dwell in the heavens would include...

- The elect angels
- The church which was “kept from the hour of testing” (Rev. 3:10), having been taken in the Rapture
- Those coming out of the Great Tribulation through death, over whom God spread his tabernacle (Rev. 6:9-10; 7:14-15).

F. **Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12:12)**

Believers rejoice. Unbelievers lament. Now that Satan and his demons have been denied entrance into heaven and have been cast down to the earth, the devil is filled with wrath against God’s people. He realizes that he has a limited time here on earth, and that in the short period, he must unleash his fury.

The “woe” addressed to those who dwell on earth, and this is not to be confused by the woe spoken of by John earlier (8:13; 9:12; 11:14). This woe is different the previous woes as it is not specified by a number. The woe is used in a general sense.

REVELATION 12:13-17

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*.

¹⁴ And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

¹⁵ And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

¹⁶ And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

¹⁷ And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:13–17)

A. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. (12:13)

The dragon is Satan. After his defeat, he was cast out of heaven, and since then, his one consuming task was to persecute the woman and her son. The word “persecute” [Gk: *ediōken*] means “to pursue.”

The phrase “cast down/out” appears five times in Revelation 12. This phrase denotes Christ’s victory over Satan’s defeat. Satan will continue its destructive work, but God preserves and protects His people as the apple of His eye (Deut. 32:10).

The phrase “man child” is preceded by the definite article to indicate that it was our Lord Jesus Christ who ascended to his Father’s throne.

B. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. (Revelation 12:14)

In verse 14, John’s description of God’s deliverance of the woman alludes to God’s promise of deliverance of Israel at Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:4). The Israelites had just escaped from Pharaoh and the Egyptian army, and they could testify that God had safely carried them across the Red Sea. The “eagle’s wings” speaks of God’s deliverance (Deut. 32:10-11; Isa. 40:31; Ps. 91:4).

The woman, borne by eagle’s wings, was carried into the desert to the place prepared for her by God (12:6). The eagles’ wings also speak of supernatural assistance given by God in a time of human incapability. When God delivered the children of Israel, they were helpless, and God bore them on eagles’ wings.

John further writes that the woman is kept for a specified period of time – “a time, and times, and half a time” (12:14). This phrase is also used in Daniel 7:25; 12:7. During that period of time, the woman shall be kept from the “face of the serpent” meaning she will be protected from the presence of the serpent.

C. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. (Revelation 12:15)

In verse 15, we read that Satan unleashes a flood to flush out the woman. Note that the water came forth from the mouth of the serpent as a flood indicating that it probably symbolic. The flood of water from the serpent’s mouth possible indicates a flood of deceptive words.

Such deception is not uncommon coming from the serpent as he is known as the father of lies. The true church has always been subjected to the lies and slander of Satan (2:9; 3:9; see also Ps 69:2-4; 124:1-5; Isa. 59:19; Jer. 46:7-8; Dan. 9:26; 11:21-22).

D. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. (Revelation 12:16)

The persistence of Satan is more than matched by the faithfulness of God. While Satan threatens to carry the woman with the water of lies, God prepares a way for her (Isa. 43:2). The floodwaters of falsehood and persecution will not be able to overcome God's people. God will keep them safe. Here again, John alludes to God's deliverance of the people of Israel (Exod. 15:12-13)

God is able to undo the plans of Satan. Satan suffers a third loss.

- The first loss comes at the beginning of this chapter, the dragon stood in front of the woman ready to devour her child (12:4), but God prepared a place for of refuge her.
- The second loss comes God delivers the woman by eagles' wings when Satan persecuted/pursued her.
- The third loss comes after God opens the earth and swallowing the water which came forth from Satan's mouth. The earth is to be interpreted symbolically, referring to the things in the world. God employs the things of this world to thwart the wicked plans of Satan.

E. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)

When Satan fails in his attempts to kill Christ, he now directs his wrath against the followers of Christ. Two words stand out in this prophecy: son and children. The virgin gave birth to a son (Isa. 7:14) and Zion (which is another name for Jerusalem, also the place of God) brought forth children.

John describes the followers of Christ as those who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (12:17). In these two descriptions are the characteristics of God's people.

- They obey the commandments of God.
- They believe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This last part of verse 17 is important because it is the link to Revelation 13, where Satan will give power to the beast from the sea (13:1-10) and the beast from the earth (13:11-18). As we approach the last days, there will be more deception and opposition, but John has given us the formula for victory – our obedience to the Word of God, and our faith in the Son of God.