

Revelation #32**March 26, 2023****Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon****Today's Message: The War in Heaven; Revelation 12:7-12**

Chapter 12:1-6 was amazing in that we learned that the woman in chapter 12 was symbolic of Israel. We learned that the red dragon was a symbol of the devil. We learned that the plan of God from the beginning has been redemptive in nature and scope; and that the mission of the devil has been to hinder God's plan from unfolding.

Today, in 12:7-12 John sees in his vision the last efforts of Satan to thwart God's plan. John sees a war in heaven. The outcome of the war will mean that Satan will no longer, from that time on— he will no longer ever have access to heaven where he now stands as the accuser of believers! Michael and his angels clear heaven of any remnant of Satan and his angels, as Satan is hurled once and for all to the earth (12:12). Confined to earth Satan will unleash a fury never known before (12:12)

The significance of this war cannot be understated. At this juncture in Revelation, the Kingdom of God is literally at hand(12:10). (Although the Kingdom does not actually arrive until Revelation 19.) With access to heaven removed forever, and with his being confined to earth, with the Abyss close at hand and hell fire around the corner, the night is nearly over! The Lord of glory will take His rightful place having all things made subject to Him, the kingdom of heaven will remain forever and ever (Revelation 21)!

So, let's dig in to this fascinating section of Revelation 12:7-12

I. (12:7-8) The War in Heaven**A. This War is in **heaven**.**

1. Satan has waged war in heaven ever since his rebellion as we read in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:11-18.
 - a) His being cast out of heaven to earth did not, for reasons that please God, deny him access to heaven. (Job 1:6; 2:1)
2. Satan has continually been an adversary of God and His people ever since his rebellion.¹
 - a) Satan and his angels opposed God and his angels in Daniel's time (Dan. 10:12-14)
 - b) He opposes and threatens the saints of God (1 Peter 5:8)

¹ MacArthur, Garland and others make similar observations. But, MacArthur lists examples, which I highlight in points a) - f).

- c) He schemes and plans against believers (2 Cor. 2:11)
- d) He uses our weaknesses against us (Eph. 2:27)
- e) He fights to distract, discourage and discredit believers (James 4:7)
- f) He accuses believers day and night (Rev. 12:10)
- 3. *An arguable point of interest: MacArthur considers the possibility, "that this war in heaven is triggered by the rapture of the church (1 Thess. 4:16-17). As believers pass through their realm, the prince of the power of the air and his demon hosts will try to hinder their passage."*

B. The Combatants

- 1. Michael and his angels
 - a) Michael is the protector of the people of Israel (12:1)
 - (1) During the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), Michael will arise and protect Israel (Daniel 12:1-2)
- 2. The Dragon and his angels
 - a) The dragon is identified in 12:9)
 - b) The angels of the dragon (the angels mentioned in 12:4.
 - (1) They are organized and powerful
 - (a) Ephesians 6:11-12 teach believers of this formidable army. We are told to, "Put on the whole armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,, but against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."
- 3. They fought. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon and his angels.
 - a) Henry Morris notes concerning the heavenly warfare
 - (1) They use heavenly weapons which are beyond our understanding.
 - (2) Angels cannot be harmed or killed with earthly weapons, and physical force as we know it has no effect on them.
 - (3) Morris makes the assessment: "These beings are spiritual beings, but **do** operate in the physical universe. ...there must exist powerful **physico-spiritual** energies of which we can only imagine. ...it is with such energies that this war will be fought."

C. (12:8) Michael and his angels prevail over the dragon and his angels!

- 1. As powerful as they are, the dragon and his angels had "insufficient power to withstand Michael and his angels."
 - a) The Angels of God are able to defeat the strongest, vilest, most ferocious fallen angels including Satan himself. (**see Rev. 20:2!**)
- 2. Garland makes a stunning observation: He rightly notices that "Christ does not participate in the conflict, for like all the angels, Satan is a *creature*, albeit a powerful one. ...Satan himself is a creature of Christ's creating (Col. 1:16. The gap between Creator and creature is inestimable. Christ could merely blink and Satan and all evil would instantly and permanently be vanquished."
 - a) He goes on: "For Christ, as God, to stoop to battle directly with the devil would be providing Satan with a great compliment. Hence, he is dealt with by Michael, or other angelic powers, who are themselves creatures."

3. "They lost their place in heaven"
 - a) Prior to this battle Satan had access to heaven as he does to this very day!
 - (1) This is a permanent denial of access from heaven!

D. **Encouragement:** As powerful as is the devil and his dark forces, our focus and believers must not be on those evil forces, but on Him who loves us and has "delivered us out of that dominion of darkness and safely brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves." (See Col. 1:13-14). For,

1. "Greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4)
2. "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" (Romans 8:38-39)

II. (12:9) The Dragon was Hurled Down

A. The dragon

1. The ancient serpent, or *serpent of old*
 - a) This title reminds of his ancient adversarial endeavor in attempting to thwart God's redemptive plan as far back as the Garden of Eden. We covered that last week.
2. Deceives the whole world (continually, presently)
 - a) He behaves the same today as he did in the Garden when he tempted Eve to believe him and disbelieve God. (Gen. 3:4)
 - b) Jesus called him "the father of lies, with no truth in him." (John 8:44)
 - c) He continues to deceive: "The whole world is under the (deceitful) control of the evil one." (1 John 5:19)
 - d) His deceit is blinding: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers..." (2 Cor. 4:4a)
 - e) Those he deceives do his work in deceiving others: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Tim.3:13)
3. In Revelation Satan uses two formidable deceivers: The Beast and False Prophet
 - a) These are anti prophets. Contrary to God's two witnesses, who brought the light of God's Word, these two master deceivers will rule the day, deceiving the inhabitants of the earth!
 - (1) They will perform "lying wonders." (see 2 Thess.2:9-12)
 - b) And, when Satan is released from the Abyss he will once again go out to deceive the nations (Rev. 20:7-8)

B. "Hurled down"-- cast out!

1. At the cross, Christ "disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." (Col. 2:15)
 - a) The triumph of the cross established His privilege, right and authority to reclaim that which was lost and rightfully lay claim to His Kingdom.
 - b) And, Satan being **cast out** is the first stage of Christ actually *taking* His Kingdom

- c) The second stage will occur when Satan is cast into the Abyss for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3). Then Christ will sit on *David's Throne* and rule the earth.
- d) The third, and final stage when He rules over the eternal kingdom will come as Satan is thrown in the lake of fire eternally! (Rev. 20:10)

III. (12:10-12) The Loud Voice Speaks

- A. (12:10a) The loud voice responds to the removal of Satan from God's heaven! This is a signal of the beginning of the end.
 - 1. Timeline: This verse corresponds to the timing of the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the loud voices praising God with much the same words! (see Revelation 11:15)
 - a) 11:15 and 12:10 both acknowledge the coming of the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. **Compare the two verses and the similarities of each.**
 - 2. 12:10: "Have come"
 - (1) Though the Kingdom does not come until Revelation 19, the celebration acknowledges the nearness of the kingdom considering it as already accomplished!
 - 3. The Trigger for such sure confidence lies in the fact that Satan's access to heaven has been cut off forever! The next stages are coming swiftly (**see II. B. a - e**) .
- B. (12:10b) "The Accuser of our brothers..."
 - 1. The word used for *accuser* is in the present tense: *the one presently accusing*
 - a) Yes, to answer the question about Satan presently in heaven accusing the elect of God. .
 - (1) He is presently continually accusing, bringing legal accusations against God's elect.
 - (a) He is acting as a merciless prosecutor day and night.
 - (b) But the celebration will be great, as we see in this verse when he is hurled/cast out, denied access to heaven, never to accuse anymore!
- C. (12:11a) "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."
 - 1. Who are the overcomers? The Redeemed of God. It is God's redemptive work!
 - 2. By the blood of the Lamb
 - a) Believers are accused continually because we continually sin (1 Jn. 1:8)
 - b) **But because of the Lamb's one time sacrifice we are justified eternally!**
 - c) Garland states it well, "This is how "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." In our initial appeal to Christ for salvation, His work on the cross takes into account all our sins, both past, present, and future. Our sin only affects our fellowship with Him, not our standing as a justified one (see 1 Jn.1:9). Once we come to faith, Satan now appeals to the Judge Who is also the Justifier (Romans 8:33).
 - (1) Every believer overcomes the accusations of Satan because of the blood of the Lamb— even the Tribulation saints!

3. "...and by the word of their testimony"
 - a) One of the marks of the tribulation saints was their willingness to testify to the Truth about Jesus Christ, no matter if it cost them their lives!
- D. (12:11b) "...they did not love their lives so much as to shrink back from death."
 1. They overcame Satan's accusations and attacks because they did not hold tightly to their lives in the face of death!
 2. This is another mark of a true believer: faithful unto death!
- E. (12:12a) The great rejoicing in heaven!
 1. The Accuser has been hurled to the earth, never to accuse again before the presence of God!
 2. The faithful believers have overcome, prevailing even through death.
 3. Everyone who passes from this life—
 - a) The church which was "kept from the hour of testing" (Rev. 3:10)
 - b) The tribulation saints
 - c) are **forever** in God's heaven, **dwelling**. They are NO LONGER WITHIN REACH of the Beast, the False Prophet and Satan himself!
- F. (12:12b) But, "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you!"
 1. The deception will increase on the earth
- G. (12:12c) "He is filled with fury/wrath, because he knows his time is short."
 1. The devil is filled with violence, rage, anger as never before
 2. The inhabitants of the earth will experience the full weight of the judgment of the seventh trumpet which contains the 7 final bowl judgments of God's wrath.
 - a) Double wrath: The devil's and God's wrath!
 - b) When the seventh bowl ends, Satan will be cast in the Abyss for 1,000 years. Then, shortly after he is released, he will be cast into the Lake of Fire eternally!

IV. Application

- A. Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior? If you do, you need not fear losing what Christ gained through His merit and His worth on your behalf
- B. No matter the accusations Satan heaps upon you, be comforted by this: "Therefore, there is not no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!" (Rom. 8:1)
- C. We have such a great salvation founded upon the Blood of Christ! May your testimony be a mark of your true faith in Christ!