

Revelation 12:7-17

"The Rejoicing Of Heaven, The Warning Of Earth"

7 major players will surface on the main stage of the Great Tribulation. In the 1st 5 Vs of Ch 12 we see 3 of them. Israel, Satan & the Son of God, Jesus Himself all come into focus straight out of the gate.

John said that a great "sign" appeared in heaven (it's not something that will be seen on earth, it's a sign that John saw in heaven). A woman, clothed w/the sun, w/the moon under her feet, & on her head a garland of 12 stars. We won't take the time to develop it again (might grab last weeks study if you're interested in that) but we discovered through the study of scripture that this woman is to be identified *not* as Mary, *not* as the church but as the nation of Israel through whom God promised that the Messiah would be brought into the world. **That's the picture that John saw portrayed, Israel laboring in pain, crying out to give birth (even as Jesus came into the world during a time of great travail & trouble in Israel's history), she "cried out" in labor & in pain to bring forth the Messiah.**

Then John saw another sign, a great, fiery red dragon having 7 heads & 10 horns, & 7 diadems on his heads whom we identified (thx to Vs 9) as Satan in all his murderous intent & ferocious nature. **There he was poised & prepared to devour the woman's Child as soon as it was born; be it from Haman, to Herod to Hitler & all the rest Satan has always sought to do his best to exterminate, oppress & persecute the Jews. He does everything he can to thwart both the promises & the purposes of God.** God has a plan that involves very directly the nation of Israel therefore Satan wants to wipe them out.

But the Child came forth, Jesus was born, He lived a sinless life, laid down His life upon the altar of the cross paying the penalty for our sins that we might find forgiveness & restoration to God through faith in Him & His work on our behalf. **Then He ascended on high. At the end of His life/ministry on this earth Jesus ascended to the right hand of God & took His rightful place upon the throne of Heaven...**

& By the time we reach Vs 6 of Ch 12 over 2,000 yrs of world history has taken place & we find ourselves at the ½ way point of the last 7 years of human history. Once the A.C. enters into the holy place (just as Daniel the prophet spoke) & there declares himself to *be* God & demands to be worshiped *as* God, Israel's eyes will be opened, persecution will be unleashed upon the Jews & they will flee into the wilderness to a place prepared by God whereby He will provide for them & protect them 1,260 days, or 3 ½ yrs. Now look at Vs 7.

Vs 7-9

Now because we break these Ch's up into bite sized pieces we can sometimes fall out of the flow or find it difficult to follow the context. **But let's not think it coincidence that ½ way through the Great Tribulation there will be a war that breaks out in heaven, Satan will be cast out, then we see the A.C. enter the holy place demanding to be worshiped as God & unparalleled persecution is unleashed upon the Jews causing many to flee to the wilderness to be provided *for* & protected *by* God. We see all of that happen here in this Ch.**

At the mid-point of the great tribulation God will turn the tide against Satan-first in heaven, then on earth. John says that a war broke out in heaven: & we see that Michael & his angels will fight against Satan (the dragon) & *his* angels (otherwise known as the demonic forces).

Now before we delve into this too deeply I want to recognize this 4th player of the Great Tribulation main-stage, Michael. If you're not familiar w/who he is allow me to introduce him, he is an arc angel of God, evidently of the highest order or class of angelic beings. The reason I bring this is up (in brief) is because there are certain groups of people who purport that Michael (who's name means "who is like God") is actually Jesus; however biblically that is wrong on every count (both the 7th Day Adventists purport this as do the J.W.'s).

There are a # of things that they point to in order to create the rationale; as it pertains to this text they say, "See Michael must be Jesus because he exercises authority over angels, he has *his* angels." To which we say, "If Satan (a fallen angelic being) can have *his* angels (as it says here in Vs 7) then certainly Michael can have his. The bible makes it clear that there are ranks among angels, powers, principalities, a Divine chain of command in which God has issued degrees of authority among His angelic hosts.

It would seem as though Michael is of the highest authority amongst the angels; he's a "5 star general" in the armies of heaven. Now the bible doesn't mention how many arc angels there are (there could be 1,000s) I suspect there *were* 3 & now there *are* 2. It would seem perhaps that at 1 point there were 3 Arc angels, Michael, Gabriel & Lucifer; each having authority over 1/3 of the angelic hosts; which may help explain why 1/3 of the angels revolted w/Lucifer & why 2/3 remained faithful to God.

Besides if Michael were Jesus than when wrestling w/Satan over the body of Moses (as Jude purports) he would've rebuked Satan on his own authority.

But he didn't do that. He said, "The Lord rebuke you." However when Jesus was on the earth He rebuked Satan & the demonic forces w/regularity in His own authority.

But be that as it may it's at *this* point in the great tribulation that war breaks out in heaven & Michael & Satan throw down... We can only envision & imagine (in a "nowhere close" kind of way) what warfare amongst the angels would look like.

However here's what I want you to see. This dramatic battle between good & evil angels is truly a battle between equals. The reason I point that out is because many people have the mistaken notion that Satan is God's equal opposite. God is light, Satan is dark, God is good, Satan is evil therefore Satan is God's equal opposite. Listen to me, God has no equal opposite. **Isaiah 44:8** *"Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one."*

Satan is a created angelic being, limited in power, limited in knowledge & in presence. God is all-powerful, all knowing & everywhere present; there is no one like our God who knows the end from the beginning & calls those things which don't exist as though they did. If there's a counterpart for Satan it's found in Michael, this angel who seems to be chief among the angels who remained faithful to God.

But here Satan is seeking to get in the way of God's plans & God's having none of that so Michael & his angels are dispatched to deal w/it & Michael goes toe to toe w/Satan himself & promptly opens up a can of... righteous indignation on him!!!

Daniel makes mention of this in Dan Ch 12 where we read, **"At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered,"**¹

Vs 7-8

Here's something else you might take note of. Satan currently has access to heaven & can present himself before the throne of God. There's a teaching going around that states that God can't be in the presence of sin, or allow evil in His presence, the bible doesn't teach that. The bible teaches quite the opposite; Jesus came into a *world* of sinners.

Praise God?!

¹ The New King James Version. 1982 (Da 12:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We find in the book of Job that Satan presents himself before God w/regularity; primarily to point out all your flaws (more on that in a minute). But it won't be till the ½ way point of the great tribulation that Satan will be dealt w/emphatically & w/finality as it pertains to his access to heaven, notice.

Vs 9

When it says that Satan (& his angels) were “cast out” the idea is that of “suddenly & w/finality”, when it happens it'll be quick & decisive. Like when Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” It's just “wham!” & it'll be done.

“The great dragon, that serpent of old, called the devil & Satan who deceives the whole world” will be cast out. Here we have a myriad of names that are characteristically descriptive of the enemy of your soul. (We've spoken of the great dragon), next we see, “That serpent of old”. Of course we can't read that w/out it conjuring up images in our mind taking us all the way back to the beginning can we? **He's that serpent situated in the garden of Eden breathing lies & deceit all the way back from the beginning. That's the idea of the words translated “of old” or “ancient times”, it's a derivative of the word that means “from the beginning”. From the moment man was placed upon the earth Satan had it in his heart to bring him down through deceit, that serpent of old.**

“Called the ‘Devil’” which means “accuser” or “slanderer”, he likes to accuse you to your face & he loves to accuse you before God (in the next Vs he's called “the accuser of our brethren”). There you find him (in the book of Job) presenting himself before God & God says to him, “What's going on? Where have you been?” Satan says, “I've been going to & from on the earth, walking back & forth on it.” **God says, “You've been considering My servant Job haven't you? There's none like him on the face of the earth, blameless & upright, fears God, loves good, hates evil.” Satan says, “Of course he fears You, of course he serves You, You've blessed him, hedged him about & given him everything his heart could desire. Let me get at him, take those things from him & he'll curse You to Your face.”**

Satan was slandering Job, accusing him of serving God as a mercenary, only because of what was in it for him. So God allowed Satan to strip Job of all that he had & when Job lost everything he arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, fell to the ground & worshiped God saying, **“Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.”**² & In all of this Job didn't sin, nor did he charge God w/wrong...& so begins the book of Job.

² The New King James Version. 1982 [Job 1:21] Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But Satan accuses you, he condemns you, he tells you that you're no good, that you're a hypocrite of a Christian, that you're not worthy to belong to God or to try & draw near to God. You're a filthy sinner. To which we say, "You're only scratching the surface! I'm way worse & nowhere near as deserving as that!"

That's why we don't come to God on the basis of our own merit; because we can't. I'm guilty as charged; I need a good defense attorney, One who can plead His case before the judge on my behalf. Which is exactly Who we have in Christ. He's the One who has stood in the gap, & continually pleads our case before the throne of God. John said, *"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*³

The Devil is an accuser, a liar & a slanderer from the beginning. Btw this should clue you in to the origin of gossip & slander when it takes place w/in the church, that stuff stems from the pit of hell & should be rejected, not received by the body of Christ.

He is "Satan" or "adversary". Peter said, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary (or enemy) the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*⁴

He's called, "The one who deceives the whole world." He doesn't want you to believe that "In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth." He'd rather you think that you began as a worm, somehow crawling out of the ooze, that somehow the sun scorched the upper part of your anatomy & a freckle appeared. Then over millions of years & countless mutations an eyeball formed w/all it's complexities & optic nerves able to transmit the vibrations into the brain & interpret the images projected therein... & If you won't believe the truth (that you were fearfully & wonderfully made, that God formed your inward parts when they were as yet unseen) then you'll be given over to a lie.

That every intricacy/complexity of the human body given enough time & mutations eventually nailed it. The reproductive system (male & female), the cardiovascular system, the nervous system, the muscular system, the skeletal system... You're trying to tell me that it doesn't take more faith to believe that hogwash!?

Here's the deal, people are deceived, & once you refuse to believe the truth there's nothing left but a lie & there are no limits to the lie that people believe once they've rejected the truth. It's Satan's agenda to deceive the whole world.

³ The New King James Version. 1982 (1 Jn 2:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ The New King James Version. 1982 (1 Pe 5:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

In writing to the Corinthians Paul said, *"...if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."*⁵

He's a deceiver, promising pleasure, paying w/pain, promising profit, paying w/loss, promising life, paying w/death. The day is coming when he will be cast down emphatically & w/finality.

Vs 10-12

1,260 days to be precise. The rejoicing of heaven becomes the warning of earth, Satan has been cast down having great wrath because he knows his time is short. Translation he will destroy as many people, & take as many people to hell w/him as he possibly can...

Though we could certainly comment on any # of things in this particular passage we wanna hone in on Vs 11 & note the components of victory over our enemy (that serpent of old called the devil & Satan).

3 Keys to the believers victory over Satan, did you catch that there? He may accuse you, but you will overcome him through 3 simple, yet powerful & profound keys. #1 By the blood of the Lamb.

He may *accuse* you, however the blood of Christ has *cleansed* you. Jesus has paid the penalty (past present & future) of all your sin. Now don't misunderstand this, the blood of Christ is not some sorta superstitious magical potion or antidote that wards off Satan like garlic to a vampire... **But rather the blood of Christ points to His substitutionary death, His life being poured out that we might have everlasting life on the basis of His work, not our own. We say it all the time around here, it's not about what we do, it's about what He's done. It was His life for ours & we find our victory in Him & His work on our behalf.** You won't find victory through praying more, or fasting more (though those things are good & deny the flesh & all of that). But victory comes in laying hold, grasping & understanding the sufficiency of the blood of Christ shed for you. Your sins are like scarlet, it's through His blood that you're washed white as snow. *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."*⁶ & Again *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."*⁷

⁵ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (2 Co 4:3-4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Eph 2:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ro 8:37). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We overcome #1 through the blood of the Lamb (J.C. who has loved us & given Himself for us) & #2 by the word of our testimony.

What does that mean? Your testimony is the reality of your story, it's where you've been, what you've done & how God rescued you through the Person of J.C. Never forget it, be open about it. I suspect your testimony reflects in certain respects that of David who said, *"He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock,"*⁸

One of the earmarks of false religion is found in man reaching up to God. Be it by knocking on doors, selling magazines or whatever. **But the testimony of the child of God has nothing to do w/my great efforts of gaining God's approval, but rather His grace & His mercy in demonstrating His love for me in that while I was still a sinner Christ died for me. The testimony of the child of God isn't me reaching up to God, it's God reaching down to me, to rescue me.** I was drowning in a sea of sin & transgression & God rescued me through J.C.

Paul shared his testimony all the time, in John 9 you find a man blind from birth whom Jesus healed & when questioned he simply said, "Listen, all I know is that once I was blind & through this Man's touch (Jesus') now I see." **That's the word of our testimony guys... We were blind but Jesus touched our lives & now we see; when the blood is applied & the testimony of grace is acknowledged, what can the enemy say?**

#1 The Blood of the Lamb, #2 The word of their testimony & #3 They did not love their lives to the death.

If the things of this world are the most important things in your life than you're destined for defeat. But if you're willing to lose your life for Christ's sake, if you don't fear the ones who can destroy the body but rather Him who can destroy both the body & the soul in hell than how can Satan defeat you? If you really believe that to live is Christ & to die is gain than what real grip can Satan place on you? You will either lose your life by seeking to save it, or you will find life in your willingness to lose it for Christ's sake.

We don't have time to go there but look it up later, Daniel Ch 3 & you'll see a real life lesson on what it looks like to not love your life to the death, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would love to tell you all about it... 😊

Vs 13-14

This is that which we've been speaking of, the unparalleled persecution of the Jews & their flight into the wilderness to be protected & provided for by God for 3 ½ yrs (a time [1 yr] and times [2yrs] & a ½ a time[6 months]).

⁸ The New King James Version. 1982 (Ps 40:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

When you see the woman given 2 wings of a great eagle, don't think of jets coming to Israel's rescue. It's a reference to God's deliverance from destruction going all the way back to the Exodus. We read the word of the Lord in Ex 19 that says, *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself."*⁹ They weren't delivered from Egypt through their own ingenuity or the power of their military, it was a sovereign work of God on *that day* & even so it will be God who delivers them on *this day*.

Vs 15-16

Since what John is seeing he's identified as a "sign" we don't expect a literal flood but more than likely it's a reference to overwhelming military action as in other places in the scripture. This the point whereby the hostility & full fury of the A.C. will be unleashed upon Israel.

Those headed for the hills God will save; be it through an earthquake that swallows the army (just as in the Days of Korah [Numb 16]), sandstorms that stall out jets, we don't know but God will cause the earth to help Israel reach her destination safely. As it says in Isaiah, *"When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. 'The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,' Says the Lord."*¹⁰

Vs 17

Be it Gentiles who come to know Christ, or Jews whose eyes are opened to Christ it will be an all out assault. Zech 13:9 indicates to us that 2/3 of Israel will die (the remnant will be protected by God, the vast majority will be murdered ruthlessly).

But here in Ch 12 we find the keys to victory; the blood of the Lamb. You are more than a conqueror through Him who has loved you, & has laid down His life for you. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, you've been purchased by the blood of J.C. & He has paid the penalty of your sin, receive it, rejoice in it.

The word of your testimony, it's all about grace, you were in a miry pit but Jesus has placed your foot upon the rock & for you to live is Christ & to die is gain. Now how can Satan get a grip on your life? To God be the glory great things *He* has done, amen? Amen.

⁹ The New King James Version. 1982 (Ex 19:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰ The New King James Version. 1982 (Is 59:19-20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Prayer Points:

Jesus we give You Praise today... For You were slain & have redeemed us to God by Your blood. You have poured out Your life that we might have the free gift of everlasting life & we find ourselves humbled & thankful once again. You have won the victory Lord, now help us to walk in it. We thank You for Your word, Your grace & Your mercy...

Salvation is a free gift, it's not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to God's mercy He saves us, through His love & His kindness through the washing of regeneration & renewing of the Holy Spirit that He pours out through J.C. It's by grace through faith in J.C. The bible doesn't say, do this, & don't do that & you will be saved. It says, "Believe on the Lord J.C. & you will be saved." If your life is in a horrible pit, in the miry clay & you want Christ to set your feet upon the rock, to give you hope, forgiveness & everlasting life, than believe on the Lord J.C. w/all your heart for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved...