



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES
Week 63: Earthly and Heavenly Conflicts, Part 3
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Review:

- A. We continue this week in our study of **Revelation Chapter 12**, which, as we've learned, is a portion of God's Word that has been greatly mishandled by many people.
- B. We've seen that this is a chapter where John is given a past, a present, and a future perspective. It's a pause in the chronology of **Revelation**, and John brings several related matters up to speed.
- C. We've studied many of these issues, but we are now focused on events this chapter outlines that will happen in the future.
 1. Chiefly, we have seen that at the halfway point of The Tribulation, a faithful remnant of Israel will heed Jesus' instructions from **Matthew Ch. 24** and flee into the wilderness of Jordan.
 2. Israel will have owned this region by that point in time because of the prophetic **Psalms 83 war**, and related conflicts around it.
 3. This is likely that area of Jordan which the ancient fortress of Petra is located. It is this region that **Daniel 11:41** tells us the antichrist is not going to be able to conquer.
 4. So, the faithful remnant of Jews of this future time will put "two and two together." They'll know from reading **Daniel and Matthew** that they will find protection and God's provision in this special place in the wilderness.
- D. Also, **Revelation 12:13-17** give us additional information on this same event:
 1. Satan will pursue this faithful remnant of Jews that are fleeing to this wilderness area, but he will be unsuccessful in destroying them.
 2. The Bible says God will supernaturally protect these fleeing Jews. Several passages compare God's protection and provision for the Israelites as they left Egypt and journeyed to the Promised Land with this future event where God will provide and protect this faithful remnant the same way.
 3. Satan, in great frustration, will then redirect his efforts to destroying the "*rest of her offspring, those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.*"
 4. It's clear from this passage that Satan is not only out to completely destroy the Jews during this Tribulation time, but he is especially focused on destroying those who have a proper relationship with Jesus Christ.

NOTE: This all gives us a bit of foundation now as we back up a bit to study **verses 7-12**. It's in these verses that we shift our focus from events that will take place on earth to events that will take place in heaven.

The two perspectives are contemporaneous: meaning, they are both related to the same timeframe and to the same events that are going on.

I. **War breaks out in heaven - - (Cf. vs. 7)**

NOTE: We are told who the participants are: Michael and his angels on one side, and the dragon (Satan) and his angels on the other side. Here are a few quick facts to know about this conflict:

- A. The timing is roughly the halfway point of the Tribulation. (Maybe off by a few days either side).
 - 1. In context, this event coincides with the faithful remnant of Jews fleeing into the wilderness, with the blowing of the seventh trumpet which announces the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, with the antichrist's abomination of desolation, and with the expulsion of Satan from heaven as we will soon see.

- B. Michael and his angels have twice the number of heavenly warriors that Satan and his angels have. We know this from **Revelation 12:4** where we are told 1/3 of the angels fell with Satan.
 - 1. This is not strictly an 'apples to apples' issue though since God is omnipotent. He permits this heavenly conflict, and He is on Michael's side in it.
 - 2. We DO see, however, the pride and arrogance of Satan glimpsed here. This is one conflict that **Revelation** lays out where we perceive Satan's ambitions to conquer Jesus Christ. The other, of course, is the Battle of Armageddon which we will study later.

- C. The Bible tells us about the two "generals" (if you will) on either side of the conflict. First, we know a few things about Satan:
 - 1. He was once called Lucifer, the "Star of the Morning," or as some translations put it "Day Star, Son of Dawn" (**Cf. Isaiah 14:12**).
 - 2. Satan was originally a cherub of the highest order. There was no angelic being above him.
 - 3. However, he became prideful in his beauty and status, and he decided he wanted to sit on a throne higher than that of God.
 - 4. Because of his sin, God permanently removed Satan from his exalted position and role. Satan fell, and he is now, by God's design, designated as the "*ruler of this world and the prince of the power of the air*" (**Cf. John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2**).
 - 5. The Bible, in various passages, calls Satan: the accuser, a slanderer, a tempter, a deceiver and the "father of lies." His present name essentially means, "adversary" or "the one who opposes." More on these things in a moment.
 - 6. Satan is a counterfeiter of all that God does and all that God is, and his ambition is to gain the worship of the world. He is the ultimate source of every false religion, cult, and deception.
 - 7. He desires at all times to introduce opposition to God's kingdom, to God's laws, and to all values which find their origin in God's Word.
 - 8. However, Satan's ultimate destiny is certain. He is condemned to spending eternity in the lake of fire (**Cf. Revelation 20:10**).

9. Till such a point, God permits Satan to have the influence and role he does. Nothing is outside of God's plan, and this heavenly conflict we see in **Revelation Ch. 12** is no different.
- D. So that's one "general" on one side of this conflict, however on the other side, "the GOOD side," we have Michael. What do we know about him?
1. Michael is described as an "archangel" in the Bible, which means "angel of the highest rank." He is the only angel given this designation.
 2. There may be others, but we are not told specifically of them. This is hinted at in **Daniel 10:13** where Michael is described as "*one of the chief princes.*"
 3. In the books of **Daniel, Jude,** and here in **Revelation,** Michael is portrayed as a warrior angel who engages in spiritual combat.
 4. Most angels in the Bible are portrayed as messengers, but Michael is described in all three of these books as contending, fighting, or standing against evil principalities and forces (**Cf. Daniel 10:13; 21; Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7**).
 5. Michael is one of only two angels given a name in Scripture, Satan himself notwithstanding. Gabriel is the other angel that is named. Because Gabriel shows up a few times, some folks think he is an archangel as well. However, the Bible does not state this.
 6. More specifically, the Bible tells us that Michael has a special role with the Jews and with the nation of Israel. This connection with Israel is reflected in the fact that Michael "*disputed about the body of Moses*" with the devil (**Cf. Jude 1:9**).
 7. In **Daniel 12:1,** the role Michael has with the Jewish people is made very clear. God communicates to Daniel that Michael is "*the great prince who protects your people.*" I believe that specific role is also being underscored here in **Revelation Ch. 12.**
 8. The Scriptures make it plain that God has set various holy angels over various countries or people groups. It may be that this hierarchy extends further down to cities, regions, and possibly certain human institutions (NOTE: This is the premise of author Frank Peretti who wrote "*This Present Darkness,*").
 9. The fallen angels have a similar hierarchy. In **Daniel 10:20** we see where the "*Prince of Persia*" and the "*Prince of Greece*" are both mentioned.
 10. It is clear from various passages in God's Word, including here in **Revelation Ch. 12,** that Michael plays a prominent role in the events of the end times.
 11. This should be no surprise to us since he is designated as the protector of the Jewish people. The Tribulation is also called "*Daniel's 70th Week*" and the "*time of Jacob's trouble.*"
 12. It is also the reason Daniel was told: that, "during the time of the end, Michael will 'arise' and there would be a time of unsurpassed trouble." (**Cf. Daniel 12:1**)
 13. Lastly, it's worth noting that the rapture of the church will be accompanied by "*the voice of the archangel saying, 'Come up here?'*" **I Thessalonians 4:16**
 14. This may be a reference to Michael since the Rapture signals the end of the Church Age and a time when God's refocuses on the nation of Israel. However, the Bible

does not specifically name Michael as being the one who gives voice during The Rapture event. This is just a good guess.

- E. Finally, and with regards to gaining a few high points on this passage here, it's a matter of conjecture as to how this battle in heaven is fought or what it may look like.
 - 1. We cannot understand the weapons and tactics here. We can only imagine. (i.e. Frank Peretti)
 - 2. These angelic beings do operate in our physical universe (i.e. Satan is the "*prince of the power of the air*," and that is a reference to our atmosphere).
 - 3. So, powerful dynamics and energies must exist here, about which we can only have vague ideas. Nevertheless, it is with these such energies and powers that this battle will be waged in heaven.

II. Next, we read that Satan loses his place in heaven - - (*Cf. vs. 8*)

NOTE: All the way up to this battle with Michael, Satan has had access to heaven. That is true even in our day.

There are three points I need to make here:

- A. **First**, Satan is one who is called the "*accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God, day and night....*" **Cf. Revelation 12:10b.** (Question: Where is God right now? Answer: In heaven.)
 - 1. So, Satan, in his role as our accuser, makes his case BEFORE God, and that means he is doing that IN heaven.
 - 2. This is precisely what he did with Job. He accused Job of being loyal to God only because of how God had blessed him.
 - 3. In **Job 1:6**, it is made very clear that these accusations are made IN heaven, and BEFORE God:

"One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them."

- 4. So, there is no room for doubt here. Satan still has access to heaven, and God permits this. Satan uses this access to accuse believers and to try to disrupt the promises and assurances that God has provided to us.
- B. **Second**, Satan's access to heaven, and his role as our accuser, is sovereignly controlled by God Himself:
 - 1. Getting back to the Job situation: God called the meeting, led the proceedings, and remained in absolute control.
 - 2. Satan's power was limited, and he could only do what God allowed him to do. Nothing more.
 - 3. This is true of evil and wickedness in general. It is all permitted by God to achieve God's ultimate glory and the fulfillment of His plans. Satan is just a pawn.

- C. **And third**, Satan's ability to have access to heaven in this manner is coming to a hard end (**Cf. Revelation 12:8**).
1. A time is coming, and it will be roughly at the halfway point of the Tribulation, when Satan's heavenly access rights will be terminated.
 2. The result is that Satan will be quarantined to earth only. His long-standing opportunity to go between heaven and earth will be done.
 3. This will be a clear signal to Satan that his powers have become much more limited, but mostly it will be a signal to him that his own window of time to achieve *what he in his pride believes he CAN achieve* will be shortened (**Cf. Revelation 12:12**).
 4. NOTE: Those who " *dwell in the heavens*" will no longer have to tolerate Satan's presence there. This is another clear indication that Satan, up to that point, has access to heaven still.

QUESTION: "Will we, after we are raptured, and we are in heaven, be able to see Satan accusing believers to God?"

ANSWER: My guess is, "Yes." If we connect all the dots from all the related passages, I think that is the natural conclusion.

We will be there and Satan, for a period of time, will still have access there. It's partly why **vs. 12a** reads as it does. We will be part of the throng that " *dwells in heaven,*" and that rejoices when Satan loses his place there. We will see and understand the change that has happened.

D. Then there is a 'loud voice in heaven' that declares the new situation (Cf. vss. 10-12)

NOTE: Several points to make here:

1. (**vs. 12**) – "*Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God...(etc.)*"
 - a. This is a very similar statement to the one made at the sounding of the seventh trumpet (**Cf. Revelation 11:15+**)
 - b. However, this statement in **Ch. 12** more specifically recognizes the removal of Satan from God's heaven as a key signal of the beginning of the end.
 - c. Just as God's judgments on earth are removing those who will refuse to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, so God executes events in heaven to remove Satan's role as 'accuser' there.
2. (**vs. 10b**) – "*...who accuses them before our God day and night*"
 - a. Note the present tense.
 - b. Prior to his heavenly defeat and his casting out, Satan is continuously active, always bringing charges against the elect.
3. (**vs. 11**) – "*They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb...(etc.)...*"

NOTE: This verse is an important one. It places emphasis upon the redeemed who overcame Satan. They overcome Satan by trusting and relying on God's work, and we see three ways they do this:

E. First: They trust in the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

1. One angle the devil has on us is he constantly reminds us of our sin. It is easy to feel our propensity to sin is somehow an indication that we are not secure in Christ.
2. **1 John 1:8** should give us some comfort as it clearly states that while we are on this earth and in this corruptible body, we WILL sin! (*"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*)
3. Again, it is so easy to feel defeated. Satan is always working to deceive us and to make us feel inadequate and unworthy. It's far easier to tally up our faults than it is to know our assurances in Christ.
4. However, this verse cuts to the chase by stating what it means to "overcome." The overcomers here counter Satan's accusations and deceptions by *"trusting the blood of the Lamb."*
5. Quite simply, they don't preoccupy themselves with what they've done or not done, instead they focus on what Jesus Christ has done. He has shed His blood for our sins. This one-time sacrifice justifies us for all eternity!
6. Here's an important angle to consider: Satan's accusations against believers are essentially efforts to stain the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.
7. Satan is basically trying to make the point that Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross for our sins was not sufficient.
8. But again, being a true 'overcomer' means you COMPLETELY trust in the shed blood of *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"* (**Cf. John 1:29**).

F. Second: Those who are redeemed proclaim the word of their testimony to overcome Satan.

1. These redeemed ones spoke verbally, without shame or fear. They spoke out loud the true condition of their hearts and what Christ had done for them.
2. **Luke 6:45** says, *"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."* The point is we say the things that we really ARE.
3. And in this case, the redeemed who overcome Satan speak openly of who they ARE in Christ. They speak of what Jesus has done to save them!
4. **Sidenote:** Some people believe that Christians ought not verbalize their testimony, but should simply live it out in their daily lives.
5. I don't think it's an either-or proposition. Living the gospel message is very important, but it's no more important than our verbal testimony, especially since God has chosen "hearing" the Word as the means of producing faith.
6. **Romans 10:17** says: *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."* We have a responsibility to verbally proclaim the Gospel and what Jesus Christ has done.
7. In fact, this verbalization is a sign of our true faith. **Romans 10:9** puts it clearly: *"...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

8. It is the word of our testimony that overcomes Satan and gives evidence of our faith.

G. Lastly, these redeemed who overcame Satan did so because they did not value their lives above that which was most important.

1. This is a matter of will and action.
2. Over and over in **Revelation** we see the examples of those who were killed *“because of the Word of God and the testimony they had maintained.”*
3. The point is a proper view of what we gain with a right relationship in Christ should FAR exceed any value we place on anything else, including our very lives.
4. Death is merely a gateway to the continuance and to the promotion of our eternal life. Our souls are safe if we are SAFE IN JESUS CHRIST.
5. As Jim Elliott said, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”