

Revelation, Part 15

Rev 12:7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 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. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. 14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

In the last session, we saw the “woman” about to give birth, and the remnant being called to flee to Edom, Moab, and Ammon was Israel. There, God promised to provide for them for 3.5 years, the duration of the last half of the tribulation — the Great Tribulation. And now we see why the remnant had to flee.

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the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

While the Greek word *polemos* is usually translated as "war" or "battle," it can also refer to a simple dispute, but full-scale war is likely the meaning here. War breaks out in Heaven and it gets physical. Satan and his minions do not prevail and are cast out of Heaven forever this time. And they were cast down to the earth.

Note all his four titles for Satan used here:

1. The Great Dragon — From the Greek *drakōn*, a mythical monster. I am not convinced other references to dragons in Scripture are entirely mythical but that is another study. Dragons, real or imagined, are fearsome creatures, and this title is designed to emphasize the danger that Satan represents to us. We should fear his power in the sense we recognize it, but with God, we can overcome the dragon.
2. The Serpent of Old — This is a reference to the serpent in the Garden of Eden and his deceptive nature. Satan is the great deceiver and he has been very successful at that throughout history.
3. The Devil — From the Greek *diabolos* which means malicious and slanderer. He is a liar and will slander anyone who gets in his way.
4. Satan — From the Greek *Satanas*, as a title, refers to a general adversary. He stands before God and accuses believers of all manner of sins. We see him doing that in Job. But Christ is our advocate in this court in Heaven.

Satan is seen as resisting Christ in three ways:

1. As the accuser of the brethren, he is in opposition to Christ as a priest.
2. As one who brings forth the first beast, he is in opposition to Christ the King.
3. As bringing forth the second beast, the false prophet, he is in opposition to Christ as a prophet.

This idea of war against Israel by Satan is mentioned in Daniel 12 and is the same event mentioned in Revelation 12

Daniel 12:1 "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,
Everyone who is found written in the book.

“A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time” is, of course, a reference to the Tribulation. “And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book” is referring to the call to flee to Edom, Moab, and Ammon and the protection God provided there for those “found written in the book”.

Michael seems to be a very high-ranking angel, an archangel, but perhaps lower in rank than Satan. He is often depicted as the protector of Israel.

There is another incident in Daniel where Michael gets involved. Daniel is praying after having a vision that terrified him. He prayed for three weeks. Then an angel appeared to him with an explanation, and Daniel asked pretty much “What took you so long?” The angel’s answer,

Daniel 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

“The prince of the kingdom of Persia” was a demon assigned to Persia (Assyria) where Daniel was being held. The messenger angel was prevented from coming to Daniel by one of Satan’s demons who had help from others when you consider the messenger’s comment about being left alone there with the “kings (plural) of Persia”. Overwhelmed and after fighting for twenty-one days, the angel had to call for reinforcements which came in the form of Michael.

Dan 12:10 Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.
¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.

Daniel 12:10 and following look at this same event we are calling the Abomination of Desolation and Israel fleeing with 1290 days remaining to this Time of Jacob's Trouble.

There are different positions as to when exactly this happens, but based on passages we have looked at and the associated time references, Satan's banishment takes place at the mid-point of the tribulation.

The sequence of events:

1. Satan is cast down
2. Which is the point when he indwells Antichrist.
3. This is closely followed by the Abomination of Desolation calling for worship of the Antichrist.
4. At the same time, the remnant of believers in Israel are told to "flee"
5. Satan begins his direct attacks on Israel beginning with the "flood" which we will look at shortly.

Is Satan in Heaven?

Some may be confused about Satan and his being cast out of Heaven. Many would assume that had happened long ago. Does Satan still have access to Heaven? Yes, he does. Not only does he have access to Heaven but he also spends time on Earth. Our next few passages will make that clear.

Rev 12:10 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.

In the context of our study of Revelation, this is about Satan being evicted from Heaven, but it also points to the fact that the Evil One has access to Heaven, even the Throne Room, and the very throne of God. While there, Satan is the accuser of the brethren and does so day and night. Job has a few more details on this heavenly access that Satan has.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up

and down on it.”⁸ And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”⁹ Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “Does Job fear God for no reason?”¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.”¹² And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

The “sons of God” are angels, both elect and fallen. Clearly, Satan has access to Heaven and has conversations with God. In this passage in Job, God challenges Satan concerning Job, a righteous man, and the “accuser” challenges God, “You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.” Satan is saying that blessed by God Job has no reason not to be righteous. Then God gives Satan permission to change that and tells Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” Do what you will, but you cannot touch his person.

Satan wastes no time and kills Job’s family and destroys his wealth, but Job remains faithful to God. So Satan goes back to God to try another approach. When the Lord asks if Satan has considered His servant Job, he replies, “Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life.⁵ But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.” Satan is saying Job still has his health; take that away and he will curse you.

God accepts the challenge and tells Satan he can do what he wants with Job but he cannot kill him. (Notice Satan has to get permission from God for all this?) Job survives the test, but we won’t get into that detail here. The point is Satan has access to Heaven and even to the Throne Room and God.

But that access ends here in Revelation 12, and Satan is cast out of Heaven.

Rev 12:7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 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.

“Salvation,” as used here, is not referring to deliverance from the fires of hell, rather it is used as referring to temporal deliverance from the terror of the Tribulation. The statement, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come,” seems to be pointing to the final victory over Satan and, in a sense, looking forward to the Kingdom. The final 3.5 years of the Tribulation are captured in this short passage. It sees the casting out of Satan as the trigger for this strategic victory that is so certain it is expressed as already accomplished.

This remnant of believers in Israel is delivered (saved) from the worst of the Great Tribulation by their being taken to a place of safety in Edom, Moab, and Ammon (verses 13-14).

This sounds a lot like Rev 11:17 “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.” When we looked at this passage recently we said it was a picture of the Second Advent and looks forward to the ultimate triumph over Satan. Like the Revelation 12:10 passage above, it sees this victory as a done deal.

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.

Three elements are said to play a part in Satan’s downfall:

1. The first principle by which he was overcome and cast out of heaven was “the blood of the Lamb”. It was the victory of the Cross that

makes temporal victory over Satan possible. The blood of the Lamb nullifies Satan's accusations against the saved because our sins are covered by the blood of the Lamb.

2. "And the word of their testimony." Then those who are saved give testimony and spread the Gospel to others. "Their testimony" refers to the testimony of the tribulation martyrs who refuse to worship the beast. That testimony is against Satan.
3. "They loved not their lives to the death." The word for love is that strong Greek word *agape* which is a love not based on human attraction but rather on the integrity in the soul of the one doing the loving. These believers stood by their testimony even to death, not foolishly seeking a martyr's death but not regarding their own lives as precious. These believers are "walking by means of the Spirit" (Gal 5:16), a lifestyle that is completely dependent upon faith in God through the power of the Spirit.

Not only did Christ provide the victory, but also those who were martyred took part in that victory. All this opposed Satan's plan.

"Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!" (Verse 12). Those in the heavens were called on to rejoice because of Satan's defeat, but the Earth was warned that the devil was filled with fury because he knew that his time was short, limited to 1,260 days, the period of the Great Tribulation. His anger is intense because of his defeat at the Cross, his defeat in the fight in Heaven, and his limited remaining time. At this point, he is getting frustrated and even angrier. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath..." Satan is now limited to Earth as the realm of his operations and he is mad. The word for wrath is *thymos*, which is a stronger and more passionate form of anger than the one usually used. This is a highly emotional state of mind and not rational. His anger warps his thinking.

The Woman Persecuted

Rev 12:13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

The focus of his anger is shifted to the woman who gave birth to the child, the source of his defeat. His only remaining way out of this is to destroy

Israel, and since he is in a position of strength and control of great armies he sees success in that mission as a real possibility.

Why must he destroy Israel?

Israel is God's chosen people who are *essential* to the overall purpose of His plan for time and eternity. It is through Israel that God will eventually redeem all that was lost by Adam in the Garden. It was through Israel that the redeemer was born. It is through God's faithfulness to Israel that we will see the final fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants: the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenant to Israel which are to be fulfilled in the Kingdom. If there are no surviving Jews to whom God can deliver the promises of the covenants, then that makes God a liar and unable to keep His promises. Thus, He is disqualified as a righteous judge, and His judgment against Satan is then null and void. By preventing the complete execution of God's plan of redemption, Satan wins.

"Relax. I have read the end of the book. We win!"

Initially, Satan's focus was to prevent the coming of the redeemer, but He failed, and Jesus came and went to the cross to be judged for our sins. Ever since the Cross when Satan essentially lost his appeal, his only recourse has been to destroy Israel and prevent the fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants. All his actions since then have been in that direction. Attacking Israel is as good as attacking God, but the success of his plan was complicated for him by salvation going out to the nations. Now Christians who share in the inheritance are also in his sights.

Rev 12:14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

God is not going to let the destruction of Israel happen. He prepares a place for the remnant where they will be safe "from the presence of the serpent" for "a time and times and half a time" (3.5 years). They are carried there on "two wings of a great eagle". Some have tried to make this reference to eagle's wings as literal and represent aircraft, specifically aircraft of the United States coming to the rescue, but that isn't likely as we have previously seen. It refers to God's deliverance as pictured using the same metaphor seen in Exodus.

Exodus 19:3 And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how **I bore you on eagles’ wings** and brought you to Myself.

God supernaturally delivered Israel out of Egypt: first, the plagues that convinced Pharaoh to let them go and then the parting of the Red Sea when they seemed trapped by Pharaoh’s army. Evidently, the woman (Israel) is given supernatural help in some form by God. The “wings of eagles” suggest speed and power, but the Bible doesn’t give any details.

The woman (Israel) was warned historically by the prophets and again by Jesus. It seems to me the only Israelites who will heed this warning will be believers who came to a saving knowledge of the Messiah mostly through the 144,000 evangelists and a grasp of OT prophecies.

Notice it says they were “nourished” for 3.5 years? The word is usually translated “as feed” but can also be viewed as nurtured, and both may be in view here. God supernaturally provided for the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, and He can do it again. Taken literally, it appears that God provides both shelter and food and water for the refugees during this period, and Satan can’t touch them there.

Rev 12:15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Either while they are escaping or shortly after, Satan attempts to destroy them. He “spewed water out of his mouth like a flood”. The words are correctly translated, and if taken literally, this is some kind of miraculous flood of water whereby Satan attempts to drown them all. But God prevents that by the earth opening up and swallowing up the water. However, note the comparative conjunction “like” in verse 15 (“as” in some

translations). The word in Greek is *hōs* and is a marker of weak relationships between events. What that means is this is figurative language and what happens is “like” or “similar to a flood” but not the same as a flood. Whatever happens, it is a flood of something. I think this is more likely a flood of stormtroopers from the antichrist’s army sent to destroy the escaping Israelites.

Whatever the “flood” is God supernaturally intervenes, and the earth opens and swallows the “flood”. The word translated “swallow” when used figuratively, as it is sometimes used in the Bible, means to destroy. That part may be literal, and the “flood” of Antichrist’s army is consumed in a way associated with earthly events, even earthquakes. My guess is Antichrist sends troops to stop this evacuation and is somehow physically prevented by some natural event. Despite that, it appears that 2/3 of these are killed according to a passage in Zechariah.

Zech 13:7 “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
Against the Man who is My Companion,”
Says the Lord of hosts.
“Strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered;
Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.
8 And it shall come to pass in all the land,”
Says the Lord,
“That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die,
But one-third shall be left in it:
9 I will bring the one-third through the fire,
Will refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them.
I will say, ‘This is My people’;
And each one will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”

Is this a picture of this “flood”? Sounds like it could be. Satan turns on “the rest of her (Israel’s) offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ”. These people must be believers because they “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ”. Evidently, some don’t get the message to flee or don’t act

fast enough. Maybe it was the Sabbath and they were Law-keeping Messianic Jews and hesitated too long? Or they are prevented by distance or some other restriction on their ability to reach this safety? Whatever the reason, Satan turns his wrath against those who did not get away. The $\frac{2}{3}$ who don't escape appear to be among the lost. "I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'..." (Zech 13:9).

What we have in this interlude is a brief picture of the hatred Satan has for God and His chosen people, Israel. This was placed in Revelation to give us some idea of just how intense his hatred is for these people. It is designed to put Biblical and historical events into perspective and for us to see that the focus has been all along to thwart God's plan for mankind and the redemption and recovery of what Adam lost in the Garden.

Any student of the Bible who has been paying attention must ask himself some probing questions, specifically concerning the "elephant in the room" question. "WHY?" In *Robinson Crusoe*, there is an interesting dialog between Crusoe and Friday, the native he finds on the island who becomes his companion. Crusoe is trying to explain to Friday the concept of the Devil as the enemy of God trying to defeat the purposes of God in the world.

Friday asks, "Is God not strong as Devil?"

Crusoe responds, "Of course, God is stronger. Christians pray to God for victory over the Devil."

Friday is puzzled by this. "But why God not kill Devil and make him no more wicked?"

Crusoe was trapped by this "ignorant" native, and he tried to evade answering by pretending he didn't hear the question, hoping Friday would forget the question. It didn't work. Friday persisted and finally, Crusoe gave up and answered, "Well, God will punish the Devil in the end."

Friday is not giving up and asks, "But why God not kill Devil now?"

Friday asked an excellent question, and we can't point to a specific proof text somewhere in the Bible where it succinctly gives us the answer to that Friday's question. Many Bible teachers won't touch this subject because, like Crusoe, they don't have an answer. Others are not so fearful and using various passages as proof texts have concluded a scenario that looks like this:

- Before or about the time of Genesis 1:1 angels and the universe were created
- Satan rebelled
- Was defeated
- Was charged with crimes
- Was sentenced to the Lake of Fire
- But clearly, the sentence has not been executed yet.

All this occurred between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. Also between those two verses the Earth, as the scene of Lucifer's rebellion, fell under condemnation along with Satan, "and the earth was *tohu wa bohu*, "formless and void" (Gen 1:2). The words mean damaged, as in no longer the perfect created product of a perfect God. Something happened to Earth between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.

Satan rebelled, was tried, found guilty, and appealed his sentence. Earth was rendered *tohu wa bohu* as part of the process. In Gen 1:2 we see the beginning of the renovation of this *tohu wa bohu* with the seven days of recreation of the Earth. This process was essentially the opening arguments in Satan's appeal trial, which is being allowed by God to prove that His judgment was fair. Mankind is Satan's appeal trial. If Satan can somehow prove that God was wrong in His judgment and is unqualified in some way to judge, then Satan wins. The events of Revelation are the closing chapters of this trial and its final disposition. We call this the "Angelic Conflict" because it is a conflict between angelic forces of good and evil, and we are in the middle of it. In fact, we play a major role in this tableau.

I have previously developed this in detail in my series on "The Angelic Conflict". This answer I just presented requires us to pull together seemingly unrelated Biblical references, and from these discern a pattern and build a doctrine around that pattern that, frankly, may or may not be

accurate. But I have heard no other explanation that can be considered even plausible. I have heard of no other explanation at all that answers Friday's question, "But why God not kill Devil and make him no more wicked?" God has to have a very good reason for allowing Satan to do what he is allowed to do because God is certainly capable of ending this with one simple gesture of His hand.