

THE APOCALYPSE – A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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The World From Satan's Eyes

(Rev 12:1-17)

The Signs – 12:1-14:20

This was the next level of revelation that John saw. He was brought all the way back to the time of Genesis. This would be the perspective of God's plan of salvation from the eyes of Satan. He will take center stage in God's revelation till his demise and destruction in Revelation 20.

1. The Woman – 12:1-2, 6, 13-16

Revelation 12:1-2, *“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”*

The Identity of the Woman (12:1-2) -- The identity of the woman has to be Israel. This is the normal use of symbolic language. This woman is not the woman of Rev 17:3, 4. The woman of Rev 12 was clothed with the sun and the moon was under her feet. And on her head was a crown of 12 stars. Do we have a passage in the Bible where this kind of imagery was used before, to represent something or someone? **Genesis 37:9-11** says, *“And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the*

saying."

The sun is Jacob. The moon is probably Rachel and Leah and the twelve stars will be the twelve sons of Jacob.

MacArthur comments, "That the **woman was clothed with the sun** reflects redeemed Israel's unique glory and brilliance, and dignity because of her exalted status as God's chosen nation (cf. Deu. 7:6; 14:2; 1 Kings 3:8; Psalm 33:12; 106:5; Isa. 43:20). It also links her with Jacob (the sun in Joseph's dream), an heir in the Abrahamic covenant; Israel's continued existence as a nation reflects the ongoing fulfillment of that covenant (cf. Gen. 12:1-2). The reference to **the moon under her feet** may be a further description of Israel's exalted status. It could also include the concept of God's covenantal relationship with Israel, since the **moon** was part of the cycle of Israel's required time of worship (cf. Num. 29:5-6; Neh. 10:33; Ps. 81:3; Isa. 1:13-14; Col. 2:16). The **crown** (*stephanos*, the crown associated with triumph in the midst of suffering and struggle) of twelve stars (Joseph being the twelfth) on the woman's **head** refers to the twelve tribes of Israel." [MacArthur, vol. 2, page 5—emphasis original]

How do you find MacArthur's interpretation? MacArthur's interpretation seems to be too far fetched. That the Sun and Moon and Twelve stars refer to Israel is no doubt. But the additions such as "clothed with the sun" means "redeemed Israel's unique glory and brilliance" is stretching the meaning a bit too far. That Israel is described in this manner by God and then "fast forward" to the birth of Christ seems to point to the choice of Israel as God's precious possession in that she has been chosen and ordained to be the nation through whom His Messiah or Christ would be born.

The focus shifted immediately to the birth of a child. Just like an ordinary child birthing there was labour pain. This describes the travail of Israel's long and painful history till the first coming of Jesus Christ. From her wilderness wandering to the crossing of the river Jordan, and right through to the time of Judges where every man did what was right in his own eyes. This was followed by the monarchy where Israel was torn into two by the end of Solomon's rule. The divided kingdom became the single kingdom after Israel, the northern kingdom, was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Soon after, that in 586 B.C. Judah, the remaining Southern Kingdom, was also destroyed by the Babylonians. The 70 years of captivity were years of shame where the Land of Promise was destitute of God's blessing and favour. After their return in the time of Zerubbabel in the 6th century B.C. Israel was never the same again. She became a vassal state, first to the Persians then the Greeks and followed by the Romans. It was during the dominance of the Romans that this present revelation was given to John and also when the Lord Jesus Christ was born.

Revelation 12:6, "*And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*"

After the birth of the child, the journey of the woman continues in 12:6. She fled into the wilderness where there was a place prepared for her by God. This transports John to the time of the Great Tribulation. The time frame of a thousand two hundred and three scores days (42 months which is also three and a half years) point to this interpretation. This would correspond to the second half of the seven years of great tribulation. When will "the fleeing into the wilderness" begin? It will probably start when the abomination of desolation is placed in the tribulation Temple. **Matthew 24:15-21**, "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him*

which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Revelation 12:13, *"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."*

The emphasis on the woman continues from **12:13**. Satan was cast out of heaven onto the earth, in a state of anger and vengeance he will hurl his wrath onto Israel which was the witness of God on earth. The word "persecuted" means "to chase or to pursue after." Israel has been the target of numerous attacks since her beginning in the days of Moses including the 430 years before they came out of Egypt. These forces that were and are still against Israel are energized by Satan.

The Messiah must come from a nation. God created, cared for and made a nation out of one man, Abraham. Through him, a nation was born. His son Isaac and not Ishmael was chosen by God and the line continues on with Isaac's son, Israel and not Esau. From Israel came the twelve tribes and a nation was born when God used Egypt as the "womb" for the gestation period of 430 years and when it was time for the nation to be born, God brought His people out by a strong hand. He marched them safely through 40 years of wilderness wandering and again by His mighty hand He brought them into the Promised Land. Throughout their entire stay in the Promised Land, enemies from within and without had never ceased in their attempts to stop the plan of God in bringing forth His Messiah. Israel will always have a special place in the eyes of God. Just as God protects and cares for His own, Satan will never stop attacking God's beloved.

Revelation 12:14-16, *"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. 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. 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."*

12:14a -- "The two wings of a great eagle" depicts the protection of God as Israel fled swiftly from the grasp of Satan. **Exodus 19:4**, *"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."* Wings in the Bible usually point to some sort of protection as well as speed. **Deuteronomy 32:9-11**, *"For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:"* [see also Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4). The LORD takes very good care of His own all the time.

Was Israel a believing nation during this period of God's protection? The "belief" will come at the end of the 7 years of Great Tribulation but God's protection is given whether the person or nation realizes it or not. This is the actions of a sovereign God . . . He does what He has predetermined.

12:14b-16 -- While Israel was hiding, God will somehow nourish and protect her so that at the end of the tribulation there will be the restored nation of Israel made up of at least 144,000 Jews, 12 thousand from the 12 tribes mentioned in Rev. 7. Eventually, despite what Satan and the antichrist will try to do, all Israel will be saved as God had prophesied. **Romans 11:26**, "*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*"

12:14 is a repeat of 12:6 with a slight addition. Israel's protection was sovereign and even if Satan knew where Israel had hid herself in the wilderness, she will be safe and remain protected by God. Satan cannot touch her. The phrase "a time and times and half a time" refers to the same time period of 12:6 i.e. 42 months or three and a half years.

12:5 points to some form of forces hurled by Satan in his onslaught against Israel. "Cast out of his mouth as a flood" would probably refer to the armies that he will send against Israel. It will be swarming like a flood. This "flood (Satan's armies)" will try their level best to destroy Israel.

12:6 speaks of the earth. The earth i.e. the literal earth will be used by the LORD to protect Israel. This was done before in the past and God will do it again in the future. **Numbers 16:28-33**, "*And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.*"

The armies sent by Satan will be summarily destroyed by the LORD! A powerful and tremendous earthquake will be used by God to remove this threat sent by Satan against God's people. The invincibility and indestructibility of God's people is taught throughout history. God's people will accomplish what God has predetermined in their lives and no one can prevent this from happening until what God has predetermined is fulfilled. Hence the dictum, "Touch not the LORD's anointed and do my prophets no harm." See 1 Chron. 16:22; Psalm 105:15.

What more can a Christian ask for when he obediently serves the LORD? Jesus Christ has promised that He will be with him all the way even unto the end of the world! What a most reassuring and comforting thought when we serve the LORD faithfully.

2. The Dragon – 12:3, 4, 7-13, 15-17

Revelation 12:3-4, “*And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*”

12:3 -- Another wonder in heaven refers to none other than Satan. This was one of the, if not the, main causes of Israel's pain, the great Red Dragon. Satan is symbolically denoted as the Red Dragon because of the fierce nature of the dragon's imagery. The word “dragon” (*thanin*) in the OT is used in Psalm 74:13; 148:7; and Isa. 27:1 and 51:9 and Jer. 51:34; and Eze. 29:3 is also translated as whales in Gen. 1:21; Job 7:12; and Eze. 32:2. But that is in the Hebrew language.

But this word in the NT (*drakon*) appears only 12 times and all these 12 times are found in the book of Revelation. In all these occurrences the word refers to Satan only. Literally it means “a monster”.

This word “dragon” is not to be confused with the dragon of the Chinese mythology or any other mythology.

The colour “red” depicts a fiery disposition and bloody destruction. In other words Satan is depicted here as a large ferocious blood thirsty monster.

He has seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns (“diadems”; royal crowns used here to symbolize his power and authority) on his heads.

MacArthur wrote, “The seven heads with their seven diadems . . . represent seven consecutive world empires running their course under Satan's dominion: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist's future empire (17:9-10). The final kingdom, ruled by Antichrist, will be a ten-nation confederacy; the ten horns represent the kings who will rule under Antichrist (17:12; 13:1; Dan. 7:23-25). The shifting of the diadems from the dragon's heads to the beast's horns (13:1) reveals the shift in power from the seven consecutive world empires to the ten kings under the final Antichrist.” [MacArthur, vol. 2, page 7]

MacArthur observed correctly here for these were the nations that ruled over Israel since Israel's beginning from the time of the Exodus.

Satan's imitation of Jesus Christ the true king of kings will be complete in the last days. Millions of people will follow him.

12:4 – The dragon's tail drew (or "swept") because each and every angelic being that followed in Satan's rebellion against God did it on their own accord. Here the Bible reveals to us that when the fall of Satan occurred in heaven one third of all of God's created angelic beings fell with him. They too were cast onto the earth by the LORD together with Satan. Jesus said to His disciples in **Luke 10:18**, "*And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*" These one third fallen angels will remain in this state forever for God did not send Christ to save them. There is no turning back in repentance for an angel once an angel falls into sin.

Satan was watching and waiting like a roaring lion to devour the Lord Jesus Christ the moment He comes into this world and take on bodily form. For the first time in all of eternity, Satan knew that God the Son could be killed for He had taken on the form of a man. His helper was none other than king Herod. **Matthew 2:15-18**, "*And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*"

Some of these demons that followed Satan are now bound. **Jude 1:6**, "*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*" This would be the angels that took them wives of all which they chose from the daughters of men in the days of Noah just before the Flood (see Genesis 6:1-4). They are now kept in everlasting chains till the day of Judgement at the end of the millennium.

Revelation 12:7-9, "*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 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.*"

12:7-9 – There was war in heaven. How could there be war in heaven? Is it not true to say that all the wills of God in heaven are fulfilled? The LORD's prayer seems to imply this. Yet here the Bible says that there was war in heaven! What does this mean? When did this war begin?

This war began when Satan wanted to be like God. He fell and God had to cast him out of heaven (cf. Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:11-18). Apparently Satan was still allowed to come and go into heaven not as he pleases but as the LORD pleases (cf. Job 1, 2).

Although this is true, his dominion is not in heaven but on earth. He is known as the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4) and the prince of the power of the air in Eph. 2:2. His followers are demons hosts who will be his "spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12)."

This means that war still happens in the heavenly realm. We may not see them but they are real. Satan together with his fallen angels, have actively opposed both the holy angels and God's people since the Fall. In the Old Testament, demons sought to hinder the ministry of the holy angels to Israel in Daniel 10:12-13. In the present age, Satan is said to be like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). He will continue to oppose the spread of the gospel (Matt. 13:19, 37-39; Acts 13:10), oppress individuals (Lk. 13:10-16; Acts 10:38), and uses sin to disrupt and pollute the local churches (Acts 5:1-11).

Michael and his angels will fight against Satan and his demons. This means that in the last days, this battle in the spiritual realm will intensify. How do angels and demons fight? What kind of weapons do they have? Can the weapons of man affect them or hurt them or kill them?

"With what weapons and by what tactics this heavenly warfare will be waged is beyond our understanding. Angels cannot be injured or slain with earthly weapons, and such physical forces as we know about are not able to move spiritual beings. But these beings do operate in a physical universe, so there must exist powerful physico-spiritual energies of which we yet have only vague intimations, energies which can propel angelic bodies at superluminary velocities through space and which can move mountains and change planetary orbits. It is with such energies and powers that this heavenly battle will be waged and the spectators in heaven (including John) will watch in awe. When Michael finally prevails, and Satan is forced forever out of the heavens, a tremendous cry of thanksgiving will resound through the heavens. [Henry Morris, **The Revelation Record** (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale Publishing House, 1983), 224.]"

Michael the archangel has known Satan since the beginning of time when they were all created by God together. When the Fall took place, Michael and Satan had been at odds against one another. Michael is the defender of God's people. In Daniel 10, Michael helped the LORD Jesus Christ in his battle against Satan. Satan delayed the LORD from coming to Daniel when Daniel prayed. This delay lasted three weeks.

Daniel 12 also speaks of Michael coming to the defense of God's people. **Daniel 12:1-3**, "*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*"

In the New Testament, Michael continues to be the defender of God's people. **Jude 1:9**, "*Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*" This reveals to us that after Moses' death the evil one contested for the possession of Moses' body. Why does he want Moses' body? Perhaps he wanted it for some evil purpose like causing the people of Israel to worship it? In the will and power of the LORD, Michael prevailed. **Deuteronomy 34:5-7**, "*So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.*"

This war was waged against Satan and his hosts. This verse (Rev. 12:7) reveals to us clearly that Satan has in his command the forces of the fallen angels. This is an all out war between the archangel Michael and the good angels and Satan and the demons. The end of it was that Satan and his demons will be permanently cast out of heaven.

“But heaven’s cleansing is earth’s pollution, as Satan’s full fury explodes on humanity when he is cast to the earth (cf. 12:12). At exactly what point in the Tribulation Satan and the demons will be evicted from heaven is not revealed, nor is the duration of their battle with Michael and the holy angels. All that can be said with certainty is that Satan and the demons will be cast out of heaven, possibly at the rapture, but no later than the midpoint of the Tribulation. Verse 12 says that Satan and his forces have only “a short time” after they leave heaven, supporting the view that they will have only the last three and a half years of the Tribulation to operate, rather than the full seven years. They will not arrive on earth later than that, since they clearly are present during the terrible events of the last three and a half years, the Great Tribulation (cf. 9:1ff). During that last period, Satan’s full power will be directed at everyone belonging to God, especially Israel (**MacArthur**, vol. 2, page 18).”

Do you agree with MacArthur’s comments? Perhaps he could be right. If so then when the Rapture and the First Resurrection take place, Satan and his fallen angels will be permanently removed from heaven.

The great dragon was cast out from heaven to the earth. This is the second but final and permanent expulsion from heaven. Why was Satan required to be cast out twice? Does it not mean that God’s power is not that powerful that He needed to cast Satan out twice? If not then what is the difference between the first and the second casting out of heaven? The first was not permanent as Satan was required to report to God as he did in Job 1 and 2. But here we are told that Satan will be removed from heaven permanently and will not be allowed in anymore as the time of man’s existence in the last days come to an end.

“The old serpent” refers to the serpent that was at the Garden of Eden. This immediately thrusts the reader back to the time of the fall in Genesis. As serpent is subtle and treacherous, perhaps this describes to us that the character of Satan from then till now remains unchanged. His methods will always be subtle and extremely treacherous and deceptive. What is the difference between deception and lying? **2 John 1:7**, *“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”*

Satan is also called the Devil (*diabolos* which means “slanderer,” “defamer,” or “false accuser”). He is known as the accuser of the brethren. He will accuse men to God and God to men and men to men. His followers will be like him employing the same evil and diabolical methods. This is his mode of operation. He will level charges especially false ones against God and His people. By his false representation of God he deceives millions of people with the many religions of the world. With his false representation of God before God’s people he attempts to cause us to lose our faith and curse God and die (cf. Job 1 and 2). But thanks to God our salvation is complete and no one can level a charge against anyone who is truly born again because of what Jesus Christ has done. **Romans 8:31-34**, *“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”*

As Satan he is known as the adversary. This is a very fitting name for the Evil One. He is constantly fighting against God. He attacks God's people, God, His Son, His Holy Spirit and His Holy Word.

Here he is also called the one "which deceiveth the whole world." The extent of his dominion is the whole world. The deception will spread to the four corners of the world. He is known as the father of lies (cf. Jn. 8:44). He seduces his victims into believing that they are doing the will of God when in fact they are doing his evil will. Revelation chapters 13 and 17 will elaborate on this domination. All of them will be cast out of heaven permanently.

Revelation 12:10-11, *"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. 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."*

12:10-11 -- When this happens, there will be great rejoicing in heaven. This loud voice declares in **Revelation 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."*

The climax of man's salvation has arrived. This must also include the entire earth as the Fall affected all of God's creation on earth. **Romans 8:19-22**, *"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."*

The restoration will take place in the days of the millennium when the earth will be re-created all over again.

The strength of God mentioned here refers to the omnipotence of God. The kingdom of our God refers to the ultimate victory that belongs to God and all of God's people. This is what it means to be a Christian. The moment you are saved you are a soldier of Christ and you are in His kingdom. As you survey the scene around you, do not forget that the kingdom of God almighty will prevail over all kingdoms. This is the fulfillment of Daniel 2 (the image of Nebuchadnezzar) and Daniel 7 (the image of the beasts).

The power of Christ is also mentioned here to complete the whole picture. The power of Christ includes His salvific work and not only His power as God. This is mentioned in great sequential detail in **Revelation 12:11**, *"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."* Christians are found in heaven not because of the power of Christ per se. But because of the salvific work of Christ on Calvary.

Here Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. He will probably challenge God and say that these are all sinners and they have no right to be in heaven. You cast me out because of my sin you must also cast all of them out because of

their sins! None of them deserve to be here in heaven! Do you think that you deserve to be in heaven? This Satan will do day and night! It is therefore so reassuring and wonderful to know that in heaven the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes for us before the throne of grace. On earth, where Satan will be cast down permanently, we have the Holy Spirit of God interceding for us with groans that cannot be uttered. How complete and great is our protection? Christians who know the truth have no need to fear.

Who are the "they" in 12:11? I believe that these refer to the Christians who have received the first resurrection and the rapture. The threefold declaration is:

- **Overcame him by the blood of the Lamb** – the only basis for the believer's victory and entrance and remaining in heaven. This is so important that the apostle declared that anyone who preaches another gospel will be anathema. **Galatians 1:6-12**, "*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" This is one of the items in the believer's armour that he must have and always keep on his head, the helmet of his salvation.

- **Overcame him by the word of their testimony** – The testimony of the saints of the goodness of God never waned. They kept on trusting in the Lord no matter what the consequences to their lives were. The Bible is emphatic in this department of the weapons Christians must use against the evil One. They use the Word of God to ward off the attacks of the evil one. The Word of God is the basis for the exercise of their faith which kept them faithful to the end. Therefore this perfect Word of God will come under constant attack all the time and till the end of time. Without the Word of God we will perish. **Ezekiel 7:24-27**, "*Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled. Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none. Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; **then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.** The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.*" [emphasis added]

And **Proverbs 29:18**, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*" The testimony of the saints will always be God's Word. This is the strength and sword of the Spirit that the Christian wields as part of his spiritual armour from the LORD (cf. Eph. 6:17).

- **they loved not their lives unto death** -- They never waver and they followed the Lord until death. Is

there any other way to serve the LORD other than unto death? **Matthew 16:24-28**, "*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*" Are we prepared to give our lives for the LORD? This is what is expected of all Christians by the Lord Jesus Christ. If we all would practice this truth how abundant and victorious a Christian life we would live. The victory over Satan is found in this verse. The strength of the victory is based upon a threefold cord: Blood of Christ; Word of God; the consecrated life of the believer.

Revelation 12:12-13, "*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. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child*"

12:12-13 -- The rejoicing – The rejoicing includes the heavens. This would be the three heavens of the Bible: the first heaven (atmosphere), the second heaven (stratosphere), and the third heaven (where God dwells). The inhabitants in these heavens were also asked to rejoice as well. This is amazing for all of God's creation in the heavens is to rejoice due to the Devil being defeated. Angels and saints would definitely be included here. The inhabitants of these three heavenly realms would be the sun, moon and stars and of course raptured and resurrected saints.

Woe on earth – This rejoicing is quickly followed by a sobering warning of woe. The inhabitants on the earth and sea will face the great wrath of the Devil as he comes down.

What does it mean for the Devil to come down?

The great wrath (*thumos*) is not a rational kind of anger but a violent outburst of rage stemming from one who knows his time is nearly up. "Satan is now like a caged lion, enraged beyond words by the limitations now placed upon his freedom. He picks himself up from the dust of the earth, shakes his fist at the sky, and glares around, choking with fury for ways to vent his hatred and his spite upon human kind [John Phillip, **Exploring Revelation**, (Chicago: Moody, 1987) 160.]

This "short period of time" refers to the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation as the next three verses reveal.

When Satan cannot take it out on God he takes it out on God's people. Did Cain not murder Abel because he could not take it out on God who rejected him and his offering? This has always been the case when we are persecuted for Christ. **2 Timothy 3:12**, "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*" That is why God says

that the Christian is doubly blessed when he suffers for Christ's sake. **Matthew 5:10-11**, "*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*" **Romans 8:17-18**, "*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" Suffering is part of what it means to be a Christian. If we live for Christ then be prepared for sufferings. If God's church fight the good fight of faith then be prepared for battles ahead. They will come. If you do not wish to have and "disturbance" from the Evil One, then lie down and play dead by not defending God's Word and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

How should we react to suffering? **Acts 5:41**, "*And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*"

Israel will be Satan's prime target for the simple reason that she was the one through whom the Messiah came the first time. Believers will be persecuted but the wrath of Satan will be on Israel as well. This was prophesied by the Lord in the Olivet Discourse. **Matthew 24:15-22**, "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*"

This persecution will ultimately result in the salvation of the 144,000 Israelites mentioned in Revelation 7. Circumstances have to be sufficiently geared toward turning the sinners to Christ. If not for this we would continue in sin and self. This was also the case in the time of Moses when the people of Israel were persecuted by the Egyptians for more than 400 years as slaves. Their departure was based upon the hardship they endured unjustly in the hands of their Egyptian masters. That resulted in their departure (the Exodus).

Satan is here called the serpent. The change in his name is significant. It reveals the character of the Evil One as he carries out his evil desires of destruction. As the serpent we are not only brought all the way back to the Garden of Eden but also to the character of a serpent itself. It is sly and cunning and poisonous. He was there from the very beginning. This will perhaps also cause Israel to see into their origins and their need for the Saviour.

Revelation 12:14, "*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*"

12:14 – The only thing to do in time like persecution is to flee. This was the manner the LORD will protect His people that Israel as a nation might be saved. **Romans 11:24-27**, "*For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be*

come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Israel will be given 2 wings of a great eagle. This is symbolic of the speed of departure and the sure protection that Israel would receive from the LORD.

This was the same symbol the LORD used to describe what He did for Israel in the Exodus. **Exodus 19:4**, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." The destination of her protection would be the wilderness. There in the wilderness the LORD would deal with Israel. She would be feed for the duration of her fugitive years (3 and ½ years). This will keep her from the face of the serpent.

12:15-17 – The serpent will "cast out of his mouth water as a flood" means that he will send forth his large and mighty army to pursue Israel. The purpose was the destruction of Israel.

The earth helped the woman by opening her mouth and swallowed up the "flood." Satan's army would be destroyed by a great and mighty earthquake. This is not unusual as the LORD had in the past used this to destroy the enemies of God's people as mentioned above.

When this failed Satan now takes it out on "the remnant of her seed." Who are these "remnant of her seed?" Some have said that this refers to the remaining children of Israel who did not flee to the wilderness. Others interpret it as a reference to Christians. I believe that it refers to the latter. Christians were persecuted before and will continue to be persecuted as they are the ones who will believe in the Messiah even though Israel would not believe Him now as the nation (woman) who brought forth the Messiah. But she will be saved as a nation in the last day. The reference to Christians is clear as they are the ones who would believe in the LORD.

Why is the phrase "keep the commandments of God" mentioned here? Is it not sufficient to simply say those who "have the testimony of Jesus Christ?" Do they not mean the same thing?

John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

John 15:9-10, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

This was how it ended in chapter 12. When we turn to chapter 13 we find a very different emphasis. It will be the revelation of the two helpers of Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet.

Satan is given a season to do his utmost against the people of God and God Himself. He will continue to thwart the

efforts of God but it will all be in vain. God will always successfully counter his every move. At the end of it all, God will turn it to His glory. **Psalms 76:10**, "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*"

3. The Man Child – 12:5

12:5 – the identity of the man child is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He will rule all nations with a rod of iron (a reference to the millennium).

The Lord Jesus Christ will be king on earth. He will rule forever as the picture of the iron rod depicts. "Iron" cannot be broken. This phrase means that Jesus Christ will rule swiftly and immediately judge the sin of the world and they will receive their just reward from Him. It will be the fulfillment of the parables of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43); and the parable of the Net (Matt. 13:47-50).

The extent of His kingdom will be in fulfillment of what the LORD promised Abraham in Genesis 15:18-21. This promise of God to His people has not been fulfilled yet, not even in the brightest moment of Israel's history. Solomon and David did not occupy the Promised Land to the extent described by the LORD in Genesis. This is one of the many indicators that the millennium must be understood as literal.

This man child was caught up! This phrase "caught up" is the same as the phrase used in 1 Thess. 4:17. Between the incarnation of the LORD Jesus Christ and His coronation (i.e. His return in clouds of glory) there was His ascension. The ascension of Christ is not emphasized as much as it ought to be. It is a very blessed and glorious truth that Christians need to remember. It speaks of greatest victory and glory for the believers in relation to the salvation that they received from the LORD. **Hebrews 1:1-3**, "*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*" The complete acceptance of God the Father in relation to the salvific work His only begotten Son was seen not only in the resurrection but also in His ascension.

The defeat of Satan was total and complete. **Acts 2:23-24**, "*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*"

The same manner in which the disciples saw Christ ascend into heaven, will also be the same manner in which He will return. **Acts 1:7-11**, "*And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be*

witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

4. Michael the Archangel – 12:7

Michael the archangel had known Satan since the time they were created. They fought now in heaven until Satan was cast out of heaven for the final and last time never to return. This was not their first battle. Michael was always seen as the defender of God's people against Satan. **Daniel 10:13**, "*But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.*" **Daniel 10:20-21**, "*Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.*" **Daniel 12:1-2**, "*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*" **Jude 1:9**, "*Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*"

This war in heaven would be the final battle in heaven before Satan is cast out permanently. We cannot be certain as to the precise timing of the battle or how long this battle lasted. It would probably occur before the second 3 and ½ years of the Great Tribulation and after or at the same time as the Rapture. This means that Satan still had access to Heaven now until the last time when he will be cast out forever.

The frequency of his trip to heaven is not known or whether he needs to ask God for permission to go in and out of heaven. We know that he will not be allowed in after this battle with Michael and the angels.

CONCLUSION

Satan's perspective of the world is one of gigantic warfare with God. His spoils of war would be the souls of men, women and children. He desires company in Hell and ultimately the Lake of Fire. The more company the merrier.

This world may look beautiful and very attractive. But this is the extreme make-over that the prince of this world has done to cover-up the filth and wickedness that he knows are so prevalent in this world. It is stained by sin and the sins are described very vividly for us in **2 Timothy 3:1-5**, "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For*

men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

What must the Christian do? Jesus says, "**from such turn away.**" This phrase "turn way" is in the imperative, commanding us to do it! It is also in the present tense warning us to keep on doing it and do not stop "turning away" from sin at any time. It is also in the middle voice revealing to us that we have to do it ourselves and no one can do it for us.

Jesus says in 1 John 2:15-17, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*"