

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

REVELATION

THE WAR IN HEAVEN

12:7-12

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The War in Heaven

Interested in the happenings of the Great Tribulation? Well, take a seat, because you are definitely in the right chapter...

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Revelation 12:7-9

First of all, do not confuse verse 9 with verse 4. Verse 4 was a rebellion, while verse 9 will be a war. In verse 4, one third of the stars of heaven (angels) were thrown down by the dragon's tail. In verse 9, it is the great dragon, himself. This is two different times. Verse 9 has not happened yet. There may be warring going on in the heavenlies, but this final battle of Michael and his angels (and the final victory) has not yet taken place.

It is very important to note that it is Michael and his angels who are warring against the dragon and his angels. Michael is the archangel of the nation of Israel.

When I was in junior high school (boy, talk about jumping around in time) I saw a set of four movies about the Great Tribulation in my church youth group. I believe one of them was called "A Thief In The Night". Anyway, if you are as old as I am, you might remember them. They are typical of end time "religious" movies, even present day ones, because they portray everything as centering around the church (the body of Christ). The Tribulation is not about the church—at all. The Tribulation is about the Jews—the nation of Israel.

This is why Michael (the archangel of Israel) is the one warring against Satan. When God releases "all hell" what does Satan do? He doesn't go against the whole world, he goes against the offspring of the woman—the Jews.

We must remember—this is a Jewish book. The Gentiles (nations other than Israel), were once excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise. The Gentiles had no hope and were without God. But in Christ Jesus, all who received the love of the truth so as to be saved were brought near by the blood of Christ. We were reconciled to God in one body—the body of Christ—the church.

The Gentiles were not first, Israel was. The gospel came to the Jew first (Romans 1:16) and tribulation and distress will come to the Jew first (Romans 2:9). The Bible is mostly about God and His Christ, but as far as earthly groups are concerned the Bible is not mainly about the church—rather, and by a long shot, it is predominately about Israel.

However, God had not (and has not) rejected His beloved people, Israel. All Israel (the righteous remnant that survives the Great Tribulation) will be saved when the Deliverer comes. He, the Messiah, will put an end to the period of the Great Tribulation.

So... back to the text...

There will be a war in heaven. Michael and his angels will be waging war with the dragon and his angels. The dragon and his angels engage in the warfare, but they will not be strong enough to win—Michael and his angels will defeat them. Why? Simply put, because it is God's will.

The dragon is clearly identified for us—he is Satan. The great dragon, the serpent of old, the devil—are all synonyms for the rebel angel, Satan.

What is the outcome of this war? When the dragon and his angels are defeated, they are all thrown down to earth. Why? We are told there is no longer a place in heaven found for Satan, nor his henchmen.

Satan, throughout the ages, has deceived, not just his angelic minions, but the entire world. Alarmingly, his deception will increase exponentially when he is finally thrown down to earth. Although I am glad there will be time when this deceiver is no longer allowed any access whatsoever to heaven, it is frightening to think of the deception he will accomplish when he is finally “unleashed” (so to speak because he will still be on God's leash—whatever length God allows it to be at that time) and sets forth his ultimate plot against the Jews and all of mankind.

When Satan originally defected and took one-third of the angels of heaven with him to earth, he still had access to heaven. Does Satan still have access to heaven? Yes, he does (although it is by God's invitation and management). We will see in the very next verse he presently accuses the brethren day and night in heaven—he is literally accusing believers of guilt before God as I pen this... *The fact remains, however, that the Savior is beside the Father, disputing the guilt of the saints on the basis of His spilt spotless blood on our behalf so we can continue to rest assured that there is no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ Jesus!*

Job tells us about a time when God calls the *bene elohim* (the sons of God, or angels) to present themselves before Him. He summons both the “dark” angels (the one-third that went with Satan at the beginning of time) as well as the “good” angels (the two-thirds that remained faithful to God) into account and lines them up in military fashion. Satan, himself, is among them and God summons him forward to interrogate him. Although Satan has access to heaven, it is solely by God's decree—and someday,

someday soon, (when Michael's battle takes place) he will be exiled from the presence of our God.

When will this war take place? That, my friends, is a most important question! And, thankfully, God answers it for us in His Word. This takes place at the great intersection of events we are navigating through in chapters 10 through 12.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:10

When is a loud voice heard in heaven? When Satan is thrown down to the earth as a result of losing a war—the war against Michael and his angels.

The voice said, *"Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night."* This is an incredibly important suitcase of information—and we need to unpack it—but first, let's take another look back at the panorama of the mountain range of Revelation and review two other peaks involved in the great intersection of events.

First of all, let's take a glance at Revelation 10:7. *...in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.*

The seventh angel is the seventh trumpet, which includes the seven bowls. The wrath of God is going to be finished at the end of those bowls (the end of the seventh trumpet).

Now look back to Revelation 11:14-15. *The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly. Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."*

The second woe is the sixth trumpet. The third woe is the seventh trumpet, which is when the mystery of God (the wrath of God) is going to be finished. The seventh angel (the third woe) sounds and there are loud voices in heaven.

Before I go further, glance once more at Revelation 12:10 and note that when Satan is thrown down John hears a loud voice in heaven, saying, *"The kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come."*

In both verses (Revelation 11:15 and Revelation 12:10) there is a time when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. Once they take up their reign—God will reign forever and ever. In other words, He will never let

mankind or any other created thing rule again. (That, my friends has not happened yet, but when it does all of creation will know it!)

Think with me for a moment. Can that event happen twice? Is it possible for this to be two different times if both verses are talking about the beginning of God's *eternal* reign? Do you see it? It is not possible to begin an eternal reign twice, is it? Revelation 11:15 and Revelation 12:10 are referring to the exact same event. Therefore, we have another verse to add to our collection of "given" verses—Revelation 10:7, Revelation 11:15, and now Revelation 12:10. If you can grasp how these verses all speak of the same exact time and event, you will be able to line other events up in their chronological order.

Do you see what is connected to the time God takes up His throne and begins to reign? When the seventh angel (third woe) sounds (Revelation 11:14-17), God takes up His throne and begins His eternal reign. When God takes up His throne and begins to reign, the mystery of God is finished (Revelation 10:7) which is the same as the wrath of God (Revelation 15:1). So, we can see that the seventh angel (the third woe) and the completion of the wrath of God (mystery of God) are "attached" to the same time when God takes up His throne. These are givens.

What does it tell us is attached to the time when God takes up His throne? The time when Satan is thrown down. So, do you see what you can do with that? You put those together because they're the same time.

So, when can we say Satan is thrown down according to the three woes? Satan is thrown down at the third woe. Do you see how that works? When is Satan thrown down according to the seals, trumpets, and bowls? Satan is thrown down at the seventh trumpet. Does that make sense? I hope so. Getting those givens lined up is the key to understanding the time frame of these events. Make a list of "What do I know for certain?" if you need to, but don't leave these verses until you see what they are telling you.

We know for certain that the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ comes at the same time Satan is thrown down (Revelation 12:10). We know that the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ at the same time the seventh angel sounds, which is the third woe (Revelation 11:14-17). We also know when the mystery of God's wrath is finished—in the days of the seventh angel (Revelation 10:7). We will soon witness God's wrath, because it is contained in the seven bowls of the seventh trumpet judgment, which will be poured out shortly (Revelation 15:1).

How are you doing? This is really important to work through. I hope you are praying constantly, asking God to open your eyes to behold wonderful things from His Word. I hope you are diligently studying to show yourself an approved workman, handling accurately the Word of God.

Remember the funny illustration I told you about the first time we observed the “Great Big Major Intersection”? It showed a classroom with students studying Revelation. The teacher was at the front of the class, holding a pointer stick. He had a title over his whiteboard which said, “End Times Explanation Chart” and he had arrows and lines and criss-crosses going this way and that all over it. A student stands up to ask a question, but he interrupts and says, “No questions please. I find they tend to disrupt the flow of my answers.”

I find this illustration strangely apropos to the point we are at in observing the book of Revelation. I keep saying things like, “...‘seventh trumpet’ equals ‘third woe’ equals ‘Satan thrown down’ equals ‘God takes up His throne’ equals ‘wrath of God is finished’...” and I know that if you have never observed the book of Revelation before you might feel a little overwhelmed. The important thing is to let context rule and just get familiar with the text. Right now we are at a complicated part, but it’s not really that difficult. I want to let you know that you can ask me all the questions you like. Just send me an email on our website at info@WordCenterMinistries.org. I know I don’t have all the answers, but I’m willing to try and help you all I can. (However, no questions on the tribe of Dan, please, Caleb!)

Now back to our verse at hand, Revelation 12:10...

Like I said before, Satan is presently accusing the brethren before God day and night. But what will happen when the accuser of the brethren (Satan) is thrown down to earth? The salvation of our God will come! The power of our God will come! The kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ will come! *Praise the Lord! Praise our God! Praise His Christ! Amen! Amen! Amen!*

And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. Revelation 12:11

What causes the world to react to you? I’ll tell you: it’s talking about the Lamb; it’s witnessing about the Christ; it’s speaking the Word of God; it’s speaking the Truth about God. Remember, John wrote the book of Revelation while he was incarcerated on the island of Patmos. And the reason? Because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 1:9). Remember, too, the souls underneath the altar who had been slain because of the Word of God and because of the testimony which they had maintained (Revelation 6:9).

Those two phrases—the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony—are marvelous, but they can be life-threatening to the believer, and in the future will become even more so...

Who overcomes who? Who is “him” and what do they overcome?

God's brethren overcome the accuser (Satan). What does the accuser do that they need to overcome? Accuse. Satan cites our sin against God and declares us guilty before Him. He also uses his minions on earth to accuse us of a separate charge—simply being a believer in Jesus. But true brethren overcome the accuser because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony—they are faithful to their Savior even when faced with death.

Think of how amazing this is. I'll use myself as an example. Satan accuses me day and night but I overcome him because of the blood of the Lamb. I am white, I am clean, I am innocent, I am free from guilt. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I overcome him, not in my own strength, not according to the Law, but according to the blood of the Lamb. And because of the eternal accomplishment of the blood of the Lamb, my testimony will remain true to the Lamb—even when faced with death.

When the hour of judgment comes on the earth, and it will, the earth will not receive it well. Most people will not repent toward God. Instead, the world will bring vehement accusations against those who remain loyal to the Son of God. In that hour, those who confess Jesus will be faced with death, and those who love the Truth more than their own lives will be slain. But martyrs do not lose by virtue of their death—instead they overcome!

In Revelation 2-3, we saw the wonderful promises given to those who overcome. True saints (those who belong to God) overcome—they persevere. True believers keep the commandments of God and keep their faith in Jesus (Revelation 14:12). In the end, God's people will be beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God, but true believers overcome. They will remain steadfast (they will not receive the mark of the beast on their forehead) and ultimately, they will come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years! (Revelation 20:4) Hallelujah! All Glory to God!

Whew! Those mountaintops up ahead are thrilling, to be sure, but we need to stay where we are and not get too far ahead of ourselves. There is much more to see on our present mountain before we move on...

For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time. Revelation 12:12

Who is supposed to rejoice? And for what reason? The heavens and those who dwell in them are supposed to rejoice because Satan gets kicked out of their domain—and he doesn't get to come back!

We have seen a group called the earth dwellers throughout Revelation (those who dwell on the earth but do not follow God). Here is another group which is mentioned several times in Revelation—they can be called the heaven dwellers. They are the heavenly audience that includes all the creatures that are around the throne from earlier in

Revelation along with all those who are being added to heaven (such as the martyrs out of the Tribulation or the 144,000 bond-servants of God). The group of heaven dwellers will continue to grow as they watch the grand finale of God's ultimate victory on earth.

When the devil is banished from heaven he will go down to earth. Now, while the heaven dwellers will rejoice when he is kicked out of heaven, the earth and the sea are not going to feel the same way about it. He will be angry! He will be full of great wrath because he knows he only has a short time. (On a side note, remember that the devil's wrath cannot even be compared with the wrath of God.)

After losing the war in heaven, Satan is going to start a new campaign on earth—one in which he goes after the Jews more than he ever has before. He knows he only has a short time. You see, Satan knows the end, he's been around in heaven, he's read the Book, he's heard what is going to happen. Trouble is (for him), he doesn't quite understand it. God is the One Who reveals truth and Satan keeps getting things mixed up. For instance, he thought he could kill the Messiah and keep the atonement from happening, but he was dead wrong! Even though he doesn't understand it all, he knows the facts, and, very importantly, he knows he only has a short time left.

When Michael and his angels defeat Satan and his angels, he will be thrown down from heaven in the middle of the major intersection of future events. He will be filled with wrath and purpose. This is not going to be pleasant by any stretch of the imagination! Woe to the earth and woe to the sea!

His purpose? He is determined to destroy the Jews. That is why the woman (the nation of Israel) will flee into the wilderness to a place God will have prepared for her. That is why she will need to be nourished for 1,260 days.

The persecution will be horrific... but God has a plan... the nation of Israel will be purified... and the overcomers will overcome...