

WAR IN HEAVEN

REVELATION 12:7-17

Text: Revelation 12:7

Introduction:

The chapter we are studying here in Revelation is a chapter wrapped in conflict. In our last study we witnessed war between the nation of Israel, symbolized by pregnant woman, and Satan, symbolized by a great red dragon. As we read our text today, you may have noticed that these verses continue the image of conflict. In fact, verse 7 is quite a shock to the system.

When we read of war in Heaven it kind of takes us back. We do not think of Heaven as being a place where wars are fought. If the Bible announced a war on earth, we would not be shocked. Our world has a long history of bloody warfare.

According to one statistician, in the 5,560 years of recorded human history there have been some 14,531 wars. Many of history's wars were conflicts between two nations, or two factions within a nation. But, in World War II war was taken to new and devastating heights. By the time the war reached its zenith only twelve nations were not involved in the conflict on at

least some level. In the year 2,000 there were at least forty armed conflicts being fought on the soil of thirty-six different nations.' Our world is a world of warfare!

Yet, when we read of warfare in Heaven, we are taken back. This war will settle a conflict that has been raging since before there was a world. As we discovered in our last study, Lucifer, who seems to have been the chief among God's angels sinned against God. He led one-third of the angels of Heaven away from God in this rebellion and he and they were removed from God's presence. Lucifer became Satan and he has done everything in his power to disrupt the eternal plan of God to redeem His elect people and His ruined creation. Since that time, as we will discover, Satan has had limited access to Heaven. This chapter tells us about the final battle in this ages old war. In this battle, Satan, the great dragon, is forever cast out of Heaven.

While there are details here that are confusing, these verses are a blessing to the children of God. They tell us of a day when Satan will finally and eternally be cast out of Heaven. Let's look at these verses and examine a few more of the participants of the Tribulation Period. I want to preach on that time when ***The Dragon Is Cast Out.***

1. THE REVEALING OF THE DRAGON

There are several passages that talk about the devil, his origin and his activities, **Isa. 14:12-20; Eze. 28:12-19; 1 Pet. 5:8.**

Isaiah 14:12-20

¹² How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! ¹³ For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. ¹⁵ Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. ¹⁶ They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; ¹⁷ That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? ¹⁸ All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. ¹⁹ But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. ²⁰ Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.*

Ezekiel 28:12-19

¹² Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. ¹³ Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. ¹⁴ Thou *art* the anointed cherub

that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁵ Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ¹⁶ By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷ Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. ¹⁸ Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. ¹⁹ All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never *shalt* thou *be* any more.

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

This passage seems to reveal the devil far more clearly than any other passage in the Bible. So, let's learn a little more about the dragon today.)

A. v. 9 **His Names** — A quick look at the names given to this creature reveals more about him than he wants people to know.

1. **Dragon** — A winged, creature that resembles a serpent with four legs. Dragons are usually associated with fierceness, brutality, violence and destruction.

This image is fitting for Satan. He is a violent character, bent on the total destruction of God and His creation. He is responsible for countless deaths and wars.

2. **Old Serpent** — This immediately calls us back to the first appearance of Satan in the Bible, **Gen. 3:1ff**. In that passage Satan appears to Eve in the form of a serpent and entices her to commit sin.

The image of a serpent is an image of something that is evil, contemptible, detestable, deceitful, and sly. What a perfect depiction of the devil! He spends his time attempting to deceive everyone he encounters.

3. **Devil** — The word devil refers to one who is a "*slanderer, a false accuser*". It pictures him as a creature who stands before God accusing the saints of God.

This is just what the Bible says he does in **Job 1-2**. When we fail, he accuses us before the throne of God. He slanders our name and he slanders our Savior too.

4. **Satan** — This word means "*adversary*" or "*one who stands opposed*".

This is what Satan is all about. He opposes everything that has to do with God. He opposes everything God is trying to do. He opposes the people of God, the House of God, the Word of God and the plan of God. He stands in open opposition to everything that is decent, holy and right. He is an adversary!

B. v. 9-10 **His Nature** - This passage not only reveals Satan through his names, but also through his nature.

This passage reveals the two most common activities of the devil.

1. v. 9 **Revealed By His Earthly Deceptions** —

We are told that it is he "***which deceiveth the whole earth***".

The word "***deceiveth***" means "***to seduce, to lead astray, to lead out of the right way***". That is Satan's mission! When he appeared before the Lord in **Job 1:7; 2:2**, he was asked about his activities. He replied that he had come "***from going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it.***"

He was on the prowl for souls to deceive. That is what Peter says about him in **1 Pet. 1:5**. The

word "**seeking**" in that verse means "**to crave, to reason, to plot**". Satan is always plotting someone's fall. He craves the souls of men. He reasons out ways to turn people away from God and from Christ. And, he is very good at what he does! He can come into our midst and not even be recognized, **2 Cor. 11:13-14**.

Satan is a deceiver and he always has been. When he came to Eve in Eden he is called "**subtil**". That word means "**crafty and shrewd**". Satan deceived Eve and he has been deceiving people ever since. He will continue to weave his web of lies and half-truths until he is cast into the Lake of Fire.

2. v.10 Revealed By Some Heavenly Declarations — Satan is described by the host of Heaven as "**the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night**". The word "**accuser**" means "**to make an accusation**". It speaks of "**a plaintiff who brings up another person on charges**". That is Satan's business! It seems from **Job 1:6** and **2:1** that Satan still has some limited access to the throne of God.

When he appears there, he does so to condemn the saints of God. He did this to Job and to Joshua, **Zech. 3:1**. He stands before God and

points out our sins and our failures. He does not have to lie about us, because we have enough failure and sin in our lives that he has a ready supply of accusations to make. Yet, when he opens his mouth and declares his case, the saints of God have a Man on the inside! We have a lawyer in Heaven, **1 John 2:1; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25!** The word "**Advocate**" in **1 John 2:2** means "**one who pleads another's cause before a judge**".

Jesus Christ, our Advocate stands up to declare us just and justified. He pleads our case by showing the nail prints in His hands and feet. He pleads the blood He shed on the cross as the perfect, eternal payment for all our sins. The Father cries "**Case dismissed!**" Hallelujah!

2. THE REMOVAL OF THE DRAGON

A. v. 7-9 **He Is Defeated By A Heavenly Warrior** — We do not know who initiates this war in Heaven, but we know who wins it. The angelic hosts of Heaven are led in this conflict by an angel named Michael. His name means "**Who is like God?**" He is a special angel. He is called and "**archangel**" in **Jude 1:9**. In **Daniel 10:13** he is called "**one of the chief princes**." In **Daniel 12:1** he is called "**the great prince**". Michael opposes the onslaught of Satan and his demonic army. He leads the heavenly angels

in permanently ousting Satan and His demons from Heaven. **Verse 8** tells us "***neither was their place found anymore in heaven***". And **verse 9** tells us that he and his angels were "***cast out into the earth***". The words "***cast out***" mean "***to let go of a thing without caring where it falls***". Satan is forever driven from Heaven!

B. v. 10-11 He Is Defeated By Holy Witnesses —

When Satan is cast out of Heaven, the glory spills out of the cup and overflows the saucer. Heaven literally explodes in praise and thanksgiving. The tormentor, the accuser of the brethren, the archenemy of God, and the most feared and hated being in the universe has been forever expelled from Heaven! So, the citizens of Heaven praise God and the Lamb for their power and glory in overcoming the devil!

Then, praise is rendered on behalf of the Tribulation saints who were martyred for their faith. While Michael was able to expel him from Heaven, these Christian martyrs are called overcomers as well. They used three weapons to defeat the devil.

- 1. They used the blood of the Lamb** — They did not fall for Satan's lies that religion would be good enough. They did not fall for the lie that they were good enough. When they saw their condition, they turned to Jesus by faith and they

were washed in the blood of the Lamb. Once they were hidden behind the fortress of the blood of Jesus, they were safe from all attacks by Satan against their souls. He might kill their bodies, but he could not touch their souls! They had been redeemed and they and obtained eternal victory! (Have you been washed in the blood?)

2. They used the word of their testimony — They stuck to their guns! They would not renounce their faith in Jesus. The word "**testimony**" means "**report**". They claimed to be redeemed followers of Jesus and they never backed down from that claim. Their steadfastness helped them achieve victory over Satan. He may have killed their bodies, but they did with their testimonies fresh in their lips! His defeat was sealed with every death!

3. They used their supreme love & loyalty for the Lord — Even when they were threatened with death they would not back down. They loved their Redeemer more than they loved their own lives. They would sooner die for Him Who died for them than deny Him. They stood their ground and courageously faced a martyr's death, knowing that when life left the body here, it would continue forever in His blessed presence!

3. THE RAMPAGE OF THE DRAGON

Satan does not take being cast out of Heaven very well. He now turns his wrath to the only place he can still operate: earth.

A. v. 12 **The Fury Of The Dragon's Attack** — This pronounces a divine woe upon the "***the inhabitants of the earth***" because they are about to feel the unfiltered fury of an angry Devil. He knows that he only has a limited time before the eternal plan of the Lord is finished. He knows that he is facing certain judgment. Since he cannot vent his anger toward Heaven and God any longer, he turns his hatred earthward and attacks the people living upon the earth.

B. v. 13-17 **The Focus Of The Dragon's Attack** — The primary object of Satan's wrath becomes the chosen people of God, the nation of Israel. As we saw in **verses 1-6**, Satan hates Israel and does everything in his power to destroy that nation. In these verses, we are given a few more details of that terrible time.

We are told that Satan "***persecuted***" the woman. The word "***persecuted***" means "***to chase or to pursue***". It refers to a hostile pursuit. Satan goes after Israel with a vengeance. He pursues them with violent destruction on his mind!

But, we are told again that they are divinely protected. The image of eagle's wings is symbolic of God's personal protection of His chosen people, **Ex. 19:4**, "***Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.***" God brings Israel into a place of safety that He has prepared for them. There, He will feed them and care for them for three and one-half years. Satan will be prevented from totally destroying the nation of Israel!

Verse 15 depicts the attacks of Satan being like a great flood of water. He will pull out all the stops and try everything at his disposal to destroy Israel. But, even the earth gets involved. We are told in **verse 16** that the "***the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood***". This may mean that some friendly nations of the earth, Gentile people, will reach out to Israel and take them in and give to their need during those dark days. Or, it may mean that the earth will absorb the blows Satan intended for Israel. Whatever these images mean, one thing is clear; God has a plan for Israel and Satan will not thwart that plan! God is sovereign and He will do as He has said He will do concerning all things, especially the nation of Israel!

Verse 17 teaches us that there will be a faithful remnant of Israel during the dark days of the

Tribulation. There will be a multitude of Jews saved through the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish preachers and the two witnesses who will preach in Jerusalem. These redeemed Jews will embrace the Messiah and they will come back to the Word of God. They will be persecuted for their faith, but a remnant will be saved, **Matt. 24:1-22!**

God will have the final say. And He says that Satan loses and God's people win! Hallelujah!

Close:

As I have studied and preached these messages, I have seen, studied and preached some horrible things. Yet, every now and then we are allowed to find a cause for rejoicing even in this dark, mysterious book. In this passage we learn that the devil, that evil being who has fought against God, His plan and His people for thousands of years will be defeated. We learn that the one who has accused us when we fail and has condemned us by name in Heaven will one day be cast out of that city. We will learn later that his path will end in the flame of the Lake of Fire. I'd say that any word that talks about the devil getting what is coming to him is a good word!

Saddam Hussein was put to death recently Iraq. Many people are rejoiced at that event. I do not find a cause for rejoicing in the death of another human being.

Now, don't get me wrong, I am in favor of the death penalty and I believe it should be administered more swiftly than it is, but I still do not find pleasure in the death of a condemned man or woman.

But, I do find pleasure in knowing that our adversary is going to be cast into Hell some day! I praise the Lord for that. It is a reason to clear off a spot and shout!

There may be some here today that have never been saved. This is your day. You come to Jesus and He will forgive you and save you. Others may need to talk to the Lord. Let's just mind Him!