

Revelation 12:1-17 “Spiritual warfare”

I. Intro

II. Vs. 1-6 Signs of conflict

III. Vs. 7-17 Wars and victories

I. Intro

In chapters 10-14 the chronological progress of this book comes to a standstill as **John is shown things that have taken place through all of time**. The reason for this is so the reader will understand how the events during the tribulation are related to the events throughout all history and time. As we look at this chapter the central theme deals with spiritual warfare as we see four conflicts:

- a. Israel and the devil
- b. The devil and the Messiah
- c. The devil and the heavenly army
- d. The devil and those who are followers of Jesus

There are two constant truths in these two conflicts:

1. **The devil is in every one of them:** Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that “*we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*”
2. **The devil loses every time:** The reason for this is that the battle belongs to the Lord, not us.

There are three parts to this chapter in order as they appear:

- A. Vs. 1-6 **Christ born to Israel**: Here we shall see His future rulership over the nations, His ascension and the devil's attempt to destroy Him.
- B. Vs. 7-12 **The casting out of satan** and his angels from heaven and the joy this brings in heaven.
- C. Vs. 13-17 **The persecution of Israel**: Yet we see God's protection of His Son as well as Israel.

II. Vs. 1-6 Signs of conflict

We are introduced to **two great signs in these verses**:

Vs. 1 It is important that we understand the word "sign" here as this establishes the context that the "woman" here is **not a literal woman** but rather that she is symbolic of others. The question is, who? The answer comes from interpreting the identity of whom this male child of hers is.

- a. First he is a male child: Therefore, this cannot refer to the Church as **the Church is always placed in the female gender**.
- b. Second, in verse 5 this male child will rule all the nations with a "***rod of iron***". In Psalm 2:9 we are told that this male child "*shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.*" In Rev. 19:15 we are further told of this male child's reign that; "*out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron.*" In the 16th verse of that chapter, we are told His identity as being "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Clearly the male Child can only be Jesus Christ. This is further supported by Joseph's dream in Gen. 37:9-11 where he saw his father, mother and brothers all bowing down before him. He saw the sun as Jacob, the moon as Rachael and the 11 brothers as stars and Joseph filled that in part

but ultimately it points to Israel bowing before their Messiah. We see that the woman “*clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars*” is none other than the nation of Israel chosen to bring forth the Messiah as fore told to Abraham in Gen. 18:18 “***where all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him***”. In Isa 66:7-8 we are told that “*Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, she delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children.*”

Vs. 2 ***The purpose of the blessing of the nation of Israel was that from her would come the Messiah who would be a blessing for all nations.*** We are told in John 1:9-11 that, “*the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own (Israel), and His own did not receive Him.*” ***The first sign God shows us is His glorious purpose for Israel.***

Vs. 3 The second sign God shows us is found in this verse 3 and we have no problem identifying the person here as we are told that the “*great, fiery red dragon*” is none other than “*the Devil and Satan,*” in verse 9. He is described figuratively as having:

- a. “*Seven heads*”: Seven is the number of completeness, thus being a symbol of wisdom. Fittingly as Ezek. 28:12 describes him as “*the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*”
- b. “*And ten horns*”: His 10 horns remind us of his power.
- c. “*And seven diadems on his heads*”: Whereas his seven crowns speak to his authority.

In verse 4 he is seeking to destroy the Messiah as soon as He was born hoping to thwart His

reign. It is further revealing that though we are told of his beauty he is decried as a dragon and a beast which are **descriptions of ugliness showing us what pride does to beauty!**

Vs. 4-6 His tail draws a third of the stars of heaven bring them to earth. Jude 1:13 shed some light on this as we are told that fallen angels as “*wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.*” ***All of this happens beyond our history in the unseen creation.***

Isa. 14:12-17 as well as Ezek. 28:13-19 describe this event revealing to us that satan was originally called Lucifer and he was an anointed cherub possibly one of three; the others being Gabriel and Michael. Yet his heart became lifted up in pride to the point where he, a created being, actually believed himself higher than his creator. At his rebellion he caused a 1/3 of the angelic host to be deceived as well. God cast him out of heaven though clearly he still has access for a while. His first act was to deceive Adam and Eve in the garden and now we see **his twofold work:**

1. **On earth:** Eph. 2:2 “*the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience*”.
2. **In heaven:** Rev 12:10 “*the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God, day and night.*”

The good news is that Jesus told us in Luke 10:18 that He “*Saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*” This battle between Jesus and the devil has been going on since Gen. 3:15 as we were told that there would be “*enmity Between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*” It is God who declared the war and He has won the victory!

So according to 1 Peter 5:8 we have an “*adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*” But Hebrews 7:25 tells us concerning Jesus that “*He always*

lives to make intercession for them.” And 1 John 2:1 tells us that “*we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*” Thus, we see **a threefold summery of Jesus here:**

- a. “*Bore a male Child*”: Here **the focus is upon His incarnation, the humbling Himself and coming in the likeness of man.**
- b. “*Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron*”: Here **the focus is upon His 2nd coming where he will rule the nations.**
- c. “*And her Child was caught up to God and His throne*”: Here **the focus is upon the ascension into heaven where He is right now at the right hand of the Father.**

Satan will do everything he can to try to get us not to go to the cross in our own lives. It is for this reason Jesus said in Matt. 16:24-26 “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*” Paul spoke of this in Gal. 2:20 saying of himself, “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*”

Between the 5th verse and the 6th verse there is a time gap, which we are currently, living in called the age of grace and the Church. Verse 6 takes to the yet future where Israel (the woman) will flee the antichrist for the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation, perhaps what will start this is what Jesus quoting from Daniel’s prophecy referred to as the Abomination of desolation (Matt 24:15). Some believe the place to where they flee to be the rock city of Petra southeast of the Dead Sea in Jordan, (Isa 16:1-4).

III. Vs. 7-17 Wars and victories

Vs. 7-10 In verse 13 we are given a “***behind the scenes***” glimpse of spiritual warfare as satan pursues both Israel and Jesus. We know that satan used Herod for this purpose. I mention this as it relates to us as we are told in Eph 6:12 that “*we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*” Many people falsely believe that satan is already in hell, but the fact is he is not. Oh, he is well on his way as Jesus told us in Matt. 25:41, but currently he inhabits “***heavenly places***” ***working in conjunction with our fallen nature.***

Here we are told that satan is cast out and this is not the first time these two have battled as Jude tells us that they disputed over the body of Moses. Michael “***Who is like God***” against the one who proclaimed in Isa. 14:14 “I will be like the Most High”. ***Apparently there is not much of a fight, and it is good for us to realize that the devil is no match for the Lord even though he is far more powerful than we.*** Roman’s 8:31 tells us “*If God is for us, who can be against us?*”

Verse 9 gives a four-fold description of the one who both accuses the brethren as well as deceives the whole world.

1. ***The great dragon***: This term describes his insatiable appetite for power and rulership, he always wants what belongs to God & will take it whenever and wherever he can.
2. ***That serpent of old***: This along with Gen. 3:1 reminds us of his cunning as he will deceive all to accomplish his desire to be worshipped.
3. ***The Devil***: The word here means “*slander, accuser or blasphemer*”. The way he accomplishes his deception is always by defaming the character and nature of God.
4. ***Satan***: The word here is adversary and as such we are reminded of his intense hatred of any and everything that is true, right and loving!

Vs. 10-11 At this time praise erupts in heaven for all know that the kingdom of God is near and Satan will never again be allowed in heaven to accuse believers before the throne of God. As such the salvation here is that of deliverance from his accusations. The word for strength implies that God is manifesting His power, which has caused His kingdom to be established.

The devil has been cast out of heaven but even on earth believers overcome him and we are given ***three ways in which they accomplished this.***

1. **“The blood of the Lamb”**: *They stood on His righteousness.* Satan as the accuser of the brethren is constantly telling us and God that we are not worthy of His attention and love. This is overcome by the **“blood of the lamb”** which reveals for all time that God’s love for us is based upon His worthiness and not our own! It is Jesus’ blood we are told in 1 John 1:9 that *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
2. **“By the word of their testimony”**: *They stood on His Word.* As we apply His word into our lives and then share it to others we are continually reminded of His faithfulness, which encourages for what we are facing today.
3. **“They did not love their lives to the death”**: *They stood on His faithfulness.* Commitment to the Lord ensures victory no matter what the consequence of our trusting in the Lord as Paul says in Romans 8:35 *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”*

Vs. 12 All of heaven rejoices when Satan is cast out but woe to unredeemed mankind. Most of his intense anger is directed at Israel and those who love the Lord but Zech. 2:8 promises *“to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.”*

Vs. 13-17 Satan chases after Israel but God gives her wings of an eagle. Satan is the author of all anti-Semitism on earth as he hates God’s instrument by which the Messiah was brought forth.

Jesus warns in Matt. 24:16 that *“those who are in Judea flee to the mountains”*, & Zech 13:8-9 predicts that *“two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: 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.’”*

Vs. 14-15 When God speaks of baring someone on eagle’s wings He is speaking His divine deliverance and protection. As in Ex. 19:4 He reminds them of this as He says, *“how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.”* God will prepare a special place where the remnant of Israel will flee and be protected and cared for. The phrase ***“water out of his mouth like a flood”*** could be describing the pouring out of hatred by the armies of the antichrist. Psalm 124:1-7 speaks of God’s protection during this time saying, *“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,” Let Israel now say; If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, When men rose up against us, Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their wrath was kindled against us; Then the waters would have overwhelmed us, The stream would have gone over our soul; Then the swollen waters Would have gone over our soul. Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth. Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; The snare is broken, and we have escaped.”*

Vs. 16-17 Satan is particularly angry with those *“who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”* No doubt some of which will be 144,000 of chapter 7. Though this may be a literal flood the bible also speaks of judgement being like a flood 7 Daniel in 9:26 says that this time will such as *“The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.”* God uses the earth to protect His as Isa. 59:19 promises *“When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.”*