

>>>>>> Lesson 19 <<<<<<<

- 1) Before we begin chapter 12, we need to look at how things are unfolding in John’s vision at this point.
- 2) Though chapter 11 records the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the effects it produces are not described until chapters 15-18.
- 3) The seventh trumpet will sound near the end of the Tribulation, launching the brief, but final and devastating bowl judgments.
- 4) Following the bowl judgments, Christ returns in power and glory to begin the millennial reign.
- 5) As a review and introduction to where we are and where we are going:
 - a) **chapters 6-11** describe the events of the Tribulation up to the sounding of the seventh trumpet which we just finished.
 - b) **chapters 12-14** give an overview of that same period.
 - c) John’s vision here shows us what Satan is doing during this period. It is more or less from Satan's point of view.
 - d) In addition, we will get a true perspective of where Satan is right this minute and hopefully a better picture of how his future will unfold up to his complete destruction.
 - e) The chronological narrative of the Tribulation events then resumes in chapter 15.

Rev 12:1-6 (NIV)

- 6) John describes two signs in this passage.
 - a) Even though the same Greek word is used for both, most translations differentiate them.
 - i) Here, the NIV translates the first as, “a great and wondrous sign.” The second simply “another sign.”
 - ii) I think the amplified bible gives a better perspective on the two uses and the signs.
 - (1) The first it translates “great sign (wonder)”
 - (2) The seconds it translates “another ominous sign (wonder)”
 - b) In both cases, the word sign describes a picture of something with much deeper significance.
 - c) These are the first of 7 signs that appear in the last half of the Revelation.

7) Reading verses 1 and 2 again;

Rev 12:1-2 (NIV)

- 8) The woman here represents much more than a woman.
- 9) Pictured as a superhuman figure, she was clothed with the sun and had the moon under her feet.
- 10) She was also wearing a victor's crown, a crown of twelve stars.

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- 11) In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel is pictured as the wife of God (Isa 54:5-6; Jer 3:6-8; 31:32; Ezek 16:32; Hos 2:16).
- 12) At this point, the woman represents the faithful people in Israel who had been waiting for the Messiah who would be born from among them (Isa 9:6-7; Mic 5:2).
- 13) Some have put forth that she represents the church, but the more plausible explanation is that she represents Israel.
- 14) Later in the chapter, this woman will represent all believers — Jews and Gentiles.
- 15) God had set apart the Jews for himself (Rom 9:4-5), and that nation had given birth to the Messiah, who would "rule all nations with an iron rod" (12:5; see also Ps 2:9).
- 16) In this part of the vision, John saw that this woman, Israel, was pregnant and . . . about to give birth to the Messiah (see also Isa 26:17-18; 54:1; 66:7-12; Hos 13:13; Mic 4:9-10; 5:2-3; Matt 24:8).
- 17) When Mary gave birth to a tiny baby in Bethlehem, the entire universe took notice, for this event held cosmic significance.
- 18) This picture also symbolizes the nation of Israel agonizing for centuries as it awaited the coming Messiah, the deliverer, who would destroy evil and usher in God's eternal kingdom.

Rev 12:3-4 (NIV)

- 1) With the second sign, a new character emerges on the scene: the woman's mortal enemy.
- 2) Verse 9 clearly identifies the great red dragon as Satan (cf. 20:2).
- 3) Satan, of course, is not an actual dragon (any more than Israel is an actual woman) but a malevolent spirit being, an angel cast out of heaven because of his rebellion against God.
- 4) The symbolic language used to describe him pictures the reality of his person and character.
- 5) Only in Revelation is Satan referred to as a dragon.
- 6) Red, the color of fiery destruction and bloodshed, further stresses Satan's vicious, deadly, destructive nature.
- 7) In the words of Jesus, "He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44).
- 8) Red is a fitting color for the dragon, since he attacks both the woman and her child.
- 9) The dragon is further described as having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven crowns.
- 10) Some translations use the term diadems.
 - a) Diadem is defined originally as an ornamental head band, worn by Eastern monarchs as a badge of royalty. Later also a crown in general.
 - i) It signifies regal power, sovereignty, empire.
- 11) He is depicted as a seven-headed monster that rules the world.
- 12) MacArthur comments:

- a) Satan has been allowed by God to rule the world since the Fall and will continue to do so until the seventh trumpet sounds (11:15).
 - b) 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 the Antichrist's future empire (17:9-10).
 - c) The final kingdom, ruled by the Antichrist, will be a ten-nation confederacy; the ten horns represent the kings who will rule under the Antichrist (17:12; cf. 13:1; Dan 7:23-25).
 - d) 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 the Antichrist.
- 13) Satan's pervasive, evil influence is not limited to the human realm, but extended first into the angelic realm.
- 14) In the picturesque language of John's vision, the dragon's tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.
- 15) The references to the dragon's angels in verses 7 and 9 indicate that the stars of heaven are angels.
- 16) When Satan fell, he swept away a third of the angelic host with him.
- a) Along with their defeated leader, those evil angels were cast from heaven to the earth.
- 17) The number of angels who joined Satan in his rebellion is not revealed, but it is vast.

Rev 12:4b-6 (NIV)

- 1) This opening statement speaks of a battle that has raged for thousands of years and will continue until the devil is finally defeated and removed from the universe.
- 2) Throughout the history of the Jewish people, from Adam and Eve onward, the devil has sought to destroy Israel and thus prevent the Messiah from ever coming into his world.
- 3) God has always either protected His people from Satan **or** at some points allowed Satan to be used as a controlled punisher.
- 4) When the Messiah did arrive, Satan did everything in his power to kill him and prevent salvation from ever occurring.
 - a) From Herod's attempt to kill him thru the temptation in the desert, to the people of Nazareth attempting to kill him in Luke 4:28-30, the devil has never stopped trying.
- 5) In spite of all of Satan's relentless efforts to prevent it, the woman (Israel) gave birth to a son.

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- 6) The incarnation of the male child, the Lord Jesus Christ, "who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3; cf. Rom 9:5), was the fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14; 9:6; Mic 5:2).
- 7) Israel brought forth the Messiah.
- 8) Between Christ's incarnation and His coronation came His exaltation when He was caught up to God and to His throne at His ascension.
- 9) Satan will not give up even though he is a defeated foe.
- 10) Unable to stop Christ's birth, ascension, or rule, Satan still assaults His people.
- 11) He has already instigated the genocidal massacre of Jews in Europe, as well as the death of countless thousands throughout history.
 - a) Sorry to say, in the middle ages, some even at the hands of Christians.
- 12) During the Tribulation, Satan will increase his efforts to destroy the Jewish people, so that the nation cannot be saved as the Bible promises (Zech 12:10-13:1; Rom 11:25-27).
- 13) And so that there will be none left alive to enter the millennial kingdom, he will seek to kill believing Jews.
- 14) As always, Israel will be his prime target.
- 15) In a brief glimpse of what will be described more fully in verses 13-17, John noted that the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days (cf. v. 14).
- 16) God will frustrate Satan's attempt to destroy Israel during the Tribulation by hiding His people, just as the Lord Jesus Christ predicted:

Matt 24:15-21 (NIV)

- 1) We will come back to vs. 5 and following in a moment.

Rev 12:7-9 (NIV)

- 1) In order to understand this passage, we must get a picture of Satan's interaction with God, where he is now, where he has been in the past, and where he will ultimately be.
- 2) First, Satan rebelled against God before the creation of the world.
 - a) This is evident in the fact that he was the tempter in the form of the serpent in the garden of Eden.
- 3) Second, currently, Satan is able to be in heaven and he also roams the earth.
 - a) We see this in Job 2 times:

Job 1:6-9 (NIV)

Job 2:1-3 (NIV)

- b) In first Peter we see:

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

4) According to verse 8 in our current passage, he has a place in heaven prior to this war we are discussing.

But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

5) I think we can assume from this that, even in heaven, he is powerful,

6) We also can see from the passage in Job, and in Rev 12:10 that we will read shortly, he has access to God “day and night” and tries to influence Him against us.

7) From all of this we can know that Satan is NOT in hell.

a) This is not the picture we are normally seeing when we see a picture of him with horns, a forked tail, and flames all around him.

b) Additionally, Jesus tells us that hell is a place prepared for him and his angels.

Matt 25:41 (NIV)

8) Paul tells us, he is the chief ruler of this dark world.

Eph 6:12 (NIV)

9) To further bring this into focus.

a) As we said earlier, throughout the history of the Jewish people, from Adam and Eve onward, the devil has sought to destroy Israel and thus prevent the Messiah from ever coming into his world.

a) On the other hand, Michael the arch angel has, throughout the old testament been the “guardian angel” so to speak of the Israelite nation.

b) Satan also did everything in his power to destroy Jesus and His mission from tempting him to attempting to kill him before it was time.

10) Now, verse 5 is possibly the final clue to why vs. 6 thru 9 are here at this point and brings them into context.

5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. 6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

a) DRAT!!!! SPOILLED AGAIN!!!!

b) Jesus wins the battle for the souls of men – salvation is now complete.

c) Satan failed to stop God’s ultimate plan.

11) We are not able to comprehend the war – it’s plain, it’s weapons, or, for that matter, any other real facet of it.

12) It is supernatural and will occur in the heavenly sphere.

13) We do know:

- a) Some consider this verse to describe warfare in the ancient past – perhaps before the world was created.
- b) Others think that Satan's fall to earth took place at Jesus' resurrection or ascension.
- c) Still others say that Satan's defeat will occur in the seven-year Tribulation period.
- d) I personally believe it will take place during the tribulation.
 - i) Chronological context
 - ii) The mention of the 1260 days again.
 - iii) The events that take place after this vision during the remainder of the tribulation.
- e) From John's vision, we can see that God is protecting his people.
- f) Since Satan must realize that the final events of the universe are taking place, this is his last chance to win.

14) MacArthur comments here:

The grammatical construction of that phrase in the Greek text indicates that Satan (the dragon) will start this battle. It could be translated "Michael and his angels had to fight the dragon."

15) As to the exact reason for Satan's escalating the war to an all-out battle at this point, we are not told.

16) What we do know is Michael and his angels are victorious!

17) Most importantly, Satan and his followers will lose their access to God and are casted out of heaven.

18) Satan will never again accuse believers before God's throne.

19) Unfortunately, heaven's cleansing is earth's pollution.

20) 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.

21) What can be said with certainty is that Satan and his angels (from this point on known as demons) will be cast out of heaven, possibly at the Rapture, but no later than the midpoint of the Tribulation.

22) 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.

23) 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. 9:1 ff.).

24) During that last period, Satan's full power will be directed at anyone belonging to God, especially Israel.