

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #26 — Continuation of Lesson#25
1/24/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath
Chapter Twelve

The Conflict Between God and Satan and the Place of Israel in World History

The **“loved not their lives unto death”** probably refers to the martyrdom experienced by those whose love for Christ so surpassed their love for anything in this world that they were willing to give up everything for Jesus, even their lives. It is still true that if a person desires to follow Jesus he must be willing to give such a high priority to Christ that everything else, everything, becomes of secondary importance. What Jesus told His disciples in Mark 8:34-35 is still true:

“And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever 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; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.”

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The context, with the statement about the **“war in heaven”** following immediately after the statement in verse six that **“the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of God,”** likely means that this was the trigger that so angered Satan that he started this war. The time for this would be during the Great Tribulation and the precipitating event would be God enabling Israel to escape from Satan. We will see, in verse 12, that Satan had **“great wrath”** because he knew that God was limiting him to a brief time and that his end was to come shortly.

Something had changed regarding Michael and Satan / Lucifer. Michael and Lucifer were not strangers. In Daniel 10:13 we are told of another occasion where Michael had to stand up in defense of Daniel. Jude 9 also tells us of a conflict between Michael and **“the devil”** over the body of Moses. Whatever the other conflicts involved, this one described in Revelation 12 brings our attention to the one with the greatest consequence.

The result of the conflict was that Satan lost to Michael and was **“cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”** Immediately following His description of the war between Michael and Lucifer, God tells us that **“a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ”** indicating beyond all doubt that Satan has been defeated and that his access into the presence of God has ended.

Lest there be any confusion about his identity, God used his various names in verse nine, to make sure everyone knew who had declared war upon Him. God's enemy is man's adversary. He not only goes about as **“a roaring lion trying to devour us”** (1 Peter 5:8) and **“blinding the minds of men lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them”** (2 Cor. 4:4), but he also is the **“accuser of the brethren ... which accused them before our God day and night.”**

God tells us that Satan is done, finished, vanquished, defeated! And then God tells us something else very significant. He tells us that the believers overcame Satan because of three things. **First, “by the blood of the lamb.”** **Second,** by **“the word of their testimony.”** And, **third,** because **“they loved not their lives unto the death.”**

The **“blood of the lamb”** speaks of the price Jesus paid to redeem us from the bondage of Satan, sin and death. His blood is the one and only thing that can cleanse us from our sin and set us free from Satan.

The **“word of their testimony”** speaks of their openly declared allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a personal experience of which one is not ashamed. According to Matthew 10:32-33, no one will be allowed into the presence of God in heaven who is unwilling to publicly testify of their commitment to Jesus Christ.

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what He is doing. Thus, Lucifer transformed his logic, his ability to reason in a logical manner, into illogic. This helps explain **“why”** he had such a foolish and self-destructive idea that he, the creature, could become like God, his Creator. It is a pattern that has been reproduced countless times over the centuries and continues to be so today with few examples better than the lack of logical reasoning exhibited by those who hold to the theory of evolution and have turned it into a religion of its own.

In referring to those who come under the condemnation of God, God tells us in Romans 1:21 that **“...when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”** When a person doesn't glorify God, nor have a sense of gratitude to Him, he causes his mind, his intellectual ability, to be corrupted and perverted so that he can no longer reason logically.

Pride and ingratitude led to Satan's rebellion against God and to the “war in heaven.” It also contains a sober and frightening warning for us today since many today show no sense of gratitude for God's gifts. Also, a perverted sense of pride seems to be present in many who think too highly of themselves.

It appears that a lack of appreciation for God's graciousness gave birth to both pride and a perverted system of logic. What God gave to Lucifer, which was certainly intended for good, was abused and perverted by him until it led to his own destruction. Perhaps that is one reason God commands us to **“...give thanks for each and everything”** (1 Thessalonians 5:18) because the presence of a thankful heart seems to be protection against the destructiveness of pride. Pride and gratitude seldom, if ever, reside in the same heart together at the same time.

“When” did this **“war in heaven”** occur is the next question that comes to our minds

We do know that Satan has had access to God's presence. Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-7 both tell us about Satan having access into God's presence as does Zechariah 3:1-2. While we know that the Bible speaks of three heavens, i.e., the atmosphere above, the heavens in which the stars reside, and the highest heaven or third heaven where the throne of God is found, much of this is beyond our understanding. It is beyond me to be sure that I understand all of the questions concerning these matters. Therefore we turn our attention back to the question before us, **“when”** this **“war in heaven”** happens.

Lending further credence to the view that Israel is **“the woman”** who **“brought forth a man child”** is the role of Michael, the archangel. Daniel 12:1 tells us that **“at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people (Israel),”** and points to Michael as having a very special role in relationship to Israel. **“Michael and his angels”** indicates that Michael was an archangel over other angels and led them into battle against **“the dragon.”**

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before a fall.” Perhaps God had Solomon write this as a commentary on Lucifer’s fall.

Even after we have seen that his “**pride**” prompted his rebellion we are left to wonder what caused the “**pride.**” “**Why**” did God’s gifts to Lucifer prompt “**pride**” in himself rather than gratitude towards his Creator.

Having beauty, wealth or knowledge should not produce “**pride.**” Rather, having these should result in gratitude. They are gifts received from God and no person is better than another because he possesses more gifts than another. Lucifer had done nothing to earn or deserve them, and neither have we. If we can understand “**why**” Lucifer’s “**heart was lifted up**” as a result of having these things and his subsequent rebellion and fall, then perhaps we can take the steps that will enable us to avoid repeating his actions.

PRIDE FLOWS FROM SELF-ADMIRATION AND INGRATITUDE

We learn more as we continue to search for an answer to “**why?**” Lucifer became full of pride and acquired his perverted and illogical ambitions to think he could be as great as God.

Examining a phrase found in Eze. 28:17 we find what may be a key to both his pride and his perverted thinking: “*...thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.*”

The Hebrew word translated “**brightness**” is used only of Lucifer (Ezekiel 28:7,17) and means “**splendor.**” It is derived from another Hebrew word used to describe only the brilliant shining forth of God’s glory such as is found in Deuteronomy 33:2, Job 37:15 and Psalm 50:2.

The use of this word with its unusual meaning suggests that **Lucifer**, whose name comes from a Hebrew word meaning “**shinning,**” looked about creation and saw that only he had a radiance that was similar to God’s. It is likely that he, seeing how brilliant and full of splendor he was, chose to focus on himself and became full of self-admiration. Choosing to focus on the gifts God had given him rather than on the graciousness of the Giver, he failed to be grateful and became full of self-admiration. **His lack of gratitude was the root cause of his pride.**

INGRATITUDE PERVERTS LOGIC

The other part of that phrase in Ezekiel 28:17 tells us that “*...thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.*” This phrase indicates that the lack of gratitude is destructive, not only in that it produces pride, but also in that it perverts logic.

There is a strong indication that Lucifer had no sense of gratitude to God Who had given him all the attributes which made him so special. **The lack of gratitude also corrupts and perverts “wisdom” or the ability to understand God and**

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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.

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. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

“WHY?” did such a privileged one rebel against his Creator, his benefactor, Who had been so gracious to him. As we read the accompanying verses we may discover the answer.

PRIDE — THE CAUSE OF LUCIFER'S REBELLION

The Scriptures point to “**pride**” as a possible cause of Satan’s rebellion. Several statements indicate that Lucifer became full of pride because of he way God had created him.

In His introduction to this passage, God had told us a number of things about Lucifer. God had said, “*Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God;*” and “*Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel....;*” and “*With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures;*” and “*By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches;*” and “*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God*” (vv. 2-6). A number of times, in these introductory verses, God related Lucifer’s blessings to his “heart being lifted up,” his pride. And, as if to emphasize this relationship, in verse seventeen, one more time God told us, “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty”

In Ezekiel 28:5 we learned that Lucifer’s heart “*was lifted up because of his riches.*” Furthermore, in 28:12 God told us that he was “*full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty*” and then, in the next verse, listed a number of beautiful, precious stones with which He had adorned Lucifer. God had indeed created Lucifer to be very wealthy, very beautiful and very wise.

It is easy to see that pride was behind Lucifer’s rebellion. Things which had been given to him, things he had done nothing to deserve, were the cause of his “**pride**” and “**pride**” is very self-destructive. Solomon was right when he wrote in Proverbs 16:18 that “*Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit*

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As we move to verses seven through nine, the focus is upon the conflict between God and Satan, the **“war in heaven.”**

In verse seven **God introduces Michael, the angel, as the fourth of the “Seven Key Personalities.”**

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

Revelation 12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

Revelation 12:9 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.

The description of the **“war in heaven”** between Satan and God's angels, led by Michael, is astounding. A number of questions are likely to come to the reader's mind, some of which are difficult to answer and some have stimulated various interpretations.

The first question concerns “why?” a “war in heaven” would take place. The very possibility of such a thing is shocking. But, then there is Satan, whose audacity knows no limits. Back, over in Isaiah 14:12-15 God told us about how the pride of Satan had become so perverted that he thought that he was as good, as mighty and powerful as God.

“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! 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: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”

One ponders **“why?”** Lucifer would rebel against God and think that he could usurp God's place and authority. Reading Ezekiel 28:12-15, which describes how God had created Lucifer with such outstanding and unique characteristics, simply compounds one's astonishment. There, as we read how Satan had apparently so filled the heart of the king of Tyrus that he became identified with Satan, we also read of the wonderful, unique gifts God gave to Lucifer.

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.