

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #27 — Continuation of Lesson #26
1/31/2007

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

As we come the next verse in our study passage, verse 12, we need to remind ourselves of what we have just covered in verses ten and eleven.

In verse ten we were told that **“Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”**

The **“now”** is a signal that a change is about to **“come.”** It is the **“salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ”** and the reason for these wonderful things is that **“the accuser of our brethren is cast down.”** We are about to read what that means in the verses just ahead.

However, before we consider those verses, it is important to remind ourselves of who the participants are in the victory of Christ which has just been announced. It is those who **“...overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”** These three characteristics are the requisites to benefit from Christ's victory. God allows no religious rituals or works on the part of any man to be substituted for these requirements. Only **“the blood of the lamb”** has the power to conquer Satan and sin and make it possible for a person to have the testimony and attitude toward life and death noted in verse eleven.

A great contrast is set before us in verse twelve. Some will **“rejoice”** and some will experience **“woe.”** No greater contrast can be made between those who belong to God and those who belong to Satan.

Three **“woe judgements”** were introduced to us in 8:13. In 9:1-12 we read about the **“first woe” judgment”** and then in 9:13-11:14 we read about the **“second woe judgment.”** We now come to the **“third woe judgment”** in 12:12. It is most severe of these three judgments and includes the pouring out of the **“bowls of wrath”** as well as what happens on the earth when Satan is totally **“cast out of heaven and comes down to the earth”** never to be allowed in heaven again. This earth then becomes the site of the continued conflict in Satan's rebellion against God. Thus, here on this earth the depth of Satan's evil viciousness is seen as he asserts all of his wicked efforts to defeat God in one last futile attempt.

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. WOE to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

The **“therefore”** of verse twelve points back to verse ten and identifies those who **“rejoice.”** Rejoicing takes place in heaven because Satan is no longer allowed entrance to any part of heaven. However, there will be no **“rejoicing”** for any on this earth, only **“woe.”**

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In reference to those on the earth, we are told in verse twelve that **“the devil is come down unto you.”** This does not indicate that he chose to leave heaven of his own preference, it only states the location of his activity because in verse ten we were told that he was **“cast down,”** or **“thrown out of heaven”** as a result of his defeat.

The devil has been vanquished! In Hebrews 2:14 God tells us that Jesus Christ took upon Himself flesh and blood (a human body) **“that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”** Jesus accomplished His mission, dying on the cross and rising victoriously from the grave, after which He ascended back into heaven to reclaim the fullness of His glory. God also described this great victory in Colossians 2:13-15 by saying:

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

This victory is actually the theme of the Bible, but here God has given us only a brief summary statement of this momentous, climactic event in presenting His overview of world history.

The **“woe to the inhabitants of the earth”** is further described by the two statements at the end of verse twelve telling about what happened when the devil was **“cast down to the earth.”** He had **“great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”**

The word for **“wrath,”** **thumos** (2372), describes a raging fire. Having been defeated by Michael and his angels prior to being cast out of heaven after seeing Israel flee from him, Satan is **“full of”** or consumed by his anger. Everything he does is an expression of his furious, burning anger and his actions affect everyone on the earth, producing unprecedented misery for all.

In addition he knows and understands what God is doing and that he has **“but a short time”** until it's all over. His recognition that he has such a short time to vent his passionate hatred simply concentrates and focuses his anger.

As a result **“when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.”** From God's statement of judgment, given in Genesis 3:15, through the remainder of time, Satan had been trying to thwart God's plans for the Messiah Who would defeat him and free all of the descendants of Adam from the bondage of sin.

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Long ago Satan was able to identify God's chosen people, Israel, as the channel through which the Redeemer would come. Both the history of the world and of the Bible detail his efforts to stop God's plans from coming to fruition.

The specific target of his attacks had been directed at the Jews, the nation of Israel. We saw in the first part of Chapter twelve how he stood ready **"to devour her child"** when the Christ Child was born and how Jesus escaped. Then, in verse six, we read how God had protected **"the woman," Israel**, by providing a place of protection and provision.

Now, in verse thirteen, we come again to the reason for Satan's attacks upon **"the woman,"** which was that she **"brought forth the man child,"** the reason for his hatred.

Even though Satan has been persecuting Israel down through the ages, the **"persecution of the woman"** in verse thirteen takes place during the **Tribulation Period** and is much worse than any ever experienced before. Many places in the Old Testament, in addition to what Jesus had to say, tell us about the suffering that Israel is to experience during this seven-year period. Jesus spoke of this time in Matthew 24:15-21 and, regarding the Jews, said, **"...then there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."** In Jeremiah 30:6-7 God said:

"Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

We are told the reason Satan hates Israel is because Christ came into this world through this nation. No nation on this earth has suffered like Israel and here the reason is made clear. Had God chosen some other nation to use for His purposes, it is almost certain that nation would have suffered as Israel has.

God brought them into existence and chose them for His purposes. Not only did God bring them into existence and choose to use them for His purposes and glory in His plan to redeem mankind, but God also has blessed them in many very special ways. In addition, God provides supernatural protection for Israel. In Isaiah 54:17, regarding the nation of Israel, God said that:

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me saith the Lord."

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Also, in Isaiah 59:19 God said, *“...when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.”* When God chose Israel He knew that this would happen. Here, in Revelation 12, where He is giving us a summary of the history of this world, He is telling us about what He has done for Israel in providing for her protection against the enemy.

God used symbolical language and did not elaborate when He said, **“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”** Many Bible students think that they can determine the meaning of this symbolical language and know exactly what God does, how He does it and where this place in the wilderness is located. They are wrong. If God had intended for us to know, He would have told us. However, had God told us, Satan would also have known. Then, God's plan to protect Israel would have been compromised.

We can understand that the reference to **“a time, and times, and half a time”** means three and one half years, or the last half of the **Tribulation Period**. However, the other figures of speech God employed in verses fifteen and sixteen are mostly beyond our comprehension.

Revelation 12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

Revelation 12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

We can understand from what God tells us that the anger of Satan and his attacks upon Israel were intense and persevering unto the end.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

“The remnant of her seed” likely refers to the 100,000 faithful servants which God had earlier chosen and set apart at the beginning of the **Tribulation Period**. Satan is not allowed to touch or harm them. They, in a very special way, have God's protection and are enabled by God to witness for Him during this awful time of Great Tribulation.

While the delineation between Chapters twelve and thirteen are man-made and arbitrary, it does bring us to the conclusion of God's overview of world history. It began with the presentation of **“the woman (Israel) who brought forth the man child (Christ)”** and then described Satan's war against God and how that war involved Israel. In so doing, **five of the key personalities** were introduced to us. The last **two key personalities** will be introduced in Chapter thirteen.