

The War of the Ages, Part 2

Scripture: Revelation 12:7-12

Code: 66-42

We have the great privilege tonight, and indeed it is to

open the Word of God to hear the very voice of God speaking to us out of Revelation chapter 12. Let's look together to Revelation chapter 12. And I want to acknowledge to you that it's very difficult in one sense to sort out this chapter and put it into sermon form. There is so much that is overlapping and interwoven and recapitulates what is said earlier in the chapter that it's not as simple as just taking a few verses and then another few verses and another few verses as we are wanting to do generally. And so we tend to cycle back and pick up pieces and look ahead and pick up pieces as we work through.

It is also true that this chapter, while only containing seventeen verses, is so sweeping in its content that it goes all the way from the past, clear back when Satan fell, all the way to the future in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It embraces, in fact, all of human history. It is sweeping in its content. And though it does not give great detail, it gives us enough information to sweep us all throughout human history to understand the great raging war of the ages that has gone on between the forces of God and the forces of Satan.

Because that is the case, it is equally to know what to say and what not to say because you can literally dig in to any one of these areas of truth and expand it on and on and on, just a study of Satan alone or a study of his angels alone or the holy angels or of Michael or of Israel or all of the various characters in this great drama would and could take us months and months.

We also note here that there are things which bring us terror and there are things which bring us joy. There is the response of the wicked. There is the response of the righteous. Just so much is in this chapter. We're trying our best to give you a feeling for it, a flow of it, the sense of it and some kind of an expanded understanding which will properly enrich it as the Spirit of God would have it done.

Let's look tonight at verses 7 to 12. "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon and the dragon and his angels waged war. And they were not strong enough and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world, he was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, `Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ

have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. For this reason rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has come down to you having great wrath knowing that he has only a short time."

Now we're going to do our best to take you through this tremendous and searching text. But let me begin, if I can, with something that may get your attention. Did you know that at the present time Satan is not in hell? In fact, did you know that he has never been to hell? And did you know that when he finally does get to hell, he's not going to be in charge? In fact, when the devil gets to hell, he will be the lowest being there. He will be assigned the most horrible punishment of any creature ever made. He is not the king of hell. He is not in hell. And he's never been there.

In fact, he spends most of his time, according to this text, where? In heaven. Did you know that Satan who was once the anointed cherub, exalted above all other angels living in heaven with God, even now still spends most of his efforts before the throne of God? It tells us in the very text which I just read, verse 10, that he's there day and night. He still has access to heaven and he's not yet sentenced to hell. That doesn't come yet. In fact, as I said, he's never been to hell.

Now what this text tells us is that soon he's going to be sent out of heaven to earth and ultimately after that he will be sent to hell, which is defined in the book of Revelation later on as the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Now his reason for spending so much time in heaven now and for orchestrating his demons to propagate their deceptive lies is to accomplish what he has always wanted to accomplish and that is the overthrow of God, the overthrow of God's purposes, the overthrow of God's plan, and the overthrow of God's people. He has his devices. He has his schemes. But they all have the same basic intent...defeat God, destroy His plan, wipe out His people one way or another. And one of the things that he does is this endless harangue that he carries on in heaven. He's there day and night accusing believers before God, haranguing in the ear of God, as it were, about the unworthiness of believers. He is there reminding God of our sin and our failure and telling God He ought to let us go to hell, He ought to let go of us because we aren't worthy. There is a certain kind of hypocrisy in all of that, appealing to the righteousness of God while he himself only seeks that which is unrighteous. He wants to capture us for his own dominion of darkness in his own domain. And more than that, he wants to show that he can destroy salvation. He wants to show that he can break salvation. He wants to show that in fact he can take someone out of the hand of God. He wants to show that he can find a suitable condemnation for which God will indeed remove the salvation He once gave, he wants to obviate the promise of God, show that God's saving power can be broken, show that the sacrifice of Christ as formidable as it was can be shattered and somebody can have been saved and then lose it.

In addition to this endless harangue of accusations that goes on day and night before the throne of God against believers, he is also engaged in battle with holy angels. He and his demons over whom he rules in his kingdom are waging ongoing and incessant war with Michael and the holy angels. Satan has been identified as the prince of the power of the air. He is also the god of this world. So the theater of his operations descends from the air, the heavens where there's a celestial warfare with Michael and the holy angels, right down to earth where Satan and his demons are engaged in controlling world systems of religion and government.

Now Satan's plans are, as I said, rather simple. He wants to eliminate anybody who works for the purposes of God whether they be Jews or believers. If he could, he would kill them all. Better yet, he would destroy their faith were that possible. He also wants to bring about the unification of the whole world under his rulership. He wants to be what in fact he is only temporarily, and that only over an unrighteous world and that is the god of this world. He wants the entire world to worship him. He wants to prevent Christ from coming back and establishing His kingdom...both spiritually in the hearts of men, millennially on the earth and eternally in the new heavens and the new earth.

So he has worked ever since his fall to endeavor to thwart the purposes of God, whether they were being effected through angels or men. His efforts have been certainly to destroy the work of the holy angels, that's why they engage in battle with he and his forces so consistently. His efforts have been to destroy men, particularly those who name the name of God and are identified with Him or with Christ, namely Israel and the church. He wants to do anything he can to wipe them out, destroy them, shatter their faith. He is relentless and he never gives up. He can read the Bible just like you and me, he knows perfectly well how to interpret it. In fact, he knows the right interpretation of everything because he was the covering cherub, Lucifer, before his fall. He knows exactly what is the mind and the heart of God in these matters. He can read it just like you can. He knows he's headed for the lake of fire to burn there forever and ever. But he is not going to take that lying down. He is not going to give up. He is relentless. And even though he can read the Bible that he's not going to win, he can read his destiny as clearly as any of us can and understand it better because he understands the working of God better than we do, he still fights. And that is the war of the ages. It is this ongoing incessant relentless war between good and evil, sin and righteousness, the forces of God and the forces of Satan.

Now this battle which continually goes on and it goes on on a supernatural level between the angels and it goes on on the earth on a moral level and an ideological level and a theological level and a philosophical level, it is going on at every conceivable level in the human and superhuman realm. That whole war is going to reach its...its great climax in the future day known as the Tribulation. There is coming a day in the future after the church has been caught away in which the world will receive seven years of the wrath of God. We've been learning about it from Revelation 6 through 11. Daniel spoke of the same period of time in the prophecy of Daniel in chapter 9 and Jesus spoke of it

in Matthew chapter 24 and then again in Luke.

And so, that time is coming in which God is going to pour out judgment on the world. Well when He does that, the battle isn't going to end, in fact Satan is going to be active during that seven-year period as well. In fact, he's going to be more devastatingly active on earth than at any other time because the theater of his operation is going to be confined to the earth. You will notice in the text it says the great dragon, verse 9, was thrown down. He was thrown down. Down means down to earth, it says at the end of verse 9, "And his angels were thrown down with him." And what makes the Tribulation in part so horrible is not just the judgment of God, but it is the arrival of Satan and all of his fallen minions landing on the earth. That spells really the end of his time as prince of the power of the air and his whole operation is confined to the earth. And, of course that means that all the demons are fully occupied here in this very place. That horrifying, indescribable and unbelievable epoch of time is waiting the world of unbelieving men and women.

Now in chapter 6 through 11 we looked at that seven-year period from God's side, and in chapters 12 through 14 we look at it from Satan's side. We've already spent a great amount of time going through the structure of chapters 6 through 11 and seeing precisely what it is that God is going to do by way of His judgment. We saw that in the seven seals and the seven trumpets, and there is yet to come seven-bowl judgments that we'll get to when we get over to chapter 15. But until we get to that particular point, there's a little respite and a recapitulation of the same seven-year period only from the vantage point of Satan. And it is a fierce, fierce battle that he carries on. God is pouring out judgment but Satan is on the earth confined here, all his demons are confined here, and the conflict reaches a fever pitch.

Now somebody might ask the question, "Is not Satan already a defeated foe? I mean, wasn't he destroyed at the cross and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ?" And of course the answer to that question in a sense is yes. In John chapter 12 and verse 31 Jesus said this, "Now judgment is upon this world, now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." Jesus anticipating the cross, His triumph over sin, anticipating the resurrection, His triumph over death was saying...the ruler of this world shall be cast out and I if I be lifted up will draw all men to Me. So Jesus is saying in the cross is the defeat of Satan. The fact of his defeat occurred at the cross, the actual execution or sentencing is yet to happen.

Also in Romans 16:20 it says, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." He is already defeated by the cross, the resurrection, but the execution hasn't taken place yet. It's as if he were an incarcerated criminal waiting for the gas chamber. In Hebrews also chapter 2 and verse 14 again reminds us that Jesus Christ has destroyed his power. It says that through death Christ rendered powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil. So he is to be cast out. He has been rendered powerless. The triumph has been accomplished. The sentencing is yet future. First John 4:4 should be added to that. It says, "You are from God little children and have overcome

them because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." He is a defeated foe, the defeat has taken place but he still awaits the sentence. And until the final sentence comes, he is running around loose, doing everything he can to overturn the triumph of Christ.

Chapter 20 of Revelation and verse 3 tells us that an angel comes down from heaven, has a great chain, lays hold of the dragon and throws him into the abyss, or the pit, shuts it and seals it over him so that he can't deceive the nations any longer for the period of the thousand year kingdom. And after that, of course, he is cast into the lake of fire, down in verse 10, where he is tormented day and night forever and forever.

And even though he was defeated at the cross, he is still alive. He is still moving around until the actual sentence of execution and the battle still rages. The battle will go on until Jesus comes to incarcerate him, and then to incinerate him on his first and last trip to eternal hell, the lake of fire.

Now all of this epochal supernatural war comes to its climax in this profound passage. We know who's going to win, chapter 11 indicated it, verse 15, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He will reign forever and ever." It's very clear who is going to win, verse 17 basically says the same thing, "Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign." That anticipates the triumph of Christ even though the final battle has not yet been waged.

So the seventh trumpet is blown in chapter 11. Then we go back in chapters 12 to 14, as you know, and look at the same period of seven years from the vantage point of Satan. Now remember in the first six verses, just a brief review, this scene that plays out in this twelfth chapter, this look at the seven-year Tribulation period and the great battle that Satan is engaged in, involves a number of very important characters. We've already met three of them. First of all, we met the woman, you remember, in verse 1, a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, her head was crowned with twelve stars. We noted that in verse 6 she was fleeing into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God where she might be nourished for twelve hundred and sixty days, or three and a half years, half of that seven-year period. The woman, we said, is Israel.

Then we met the dragon, the dragon, of course, clearly is Satan. The dragon who is a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns showing his great ruling power and authority. He is the one who wants to destroy. He not only wants to destroy the woman but he wants to destroy the third character in the first six verses, the male child, that refers to Christ. So Satan tries to destroy Israel and tries to destroy the Christ, the Messiah that is born of the nation Israel.

That takes us into the time of the Tribulation. By the way, we said that Satan has been trying to destroy Israel since the beginning and he tried through many different ways to do it in the past. He tried to destroy the birth of Christ and when Christ was finally born he tried to get Herod to murder him. And then he tried to get the people of Nazareth to kill Him. And he tried a number of different

things to destroy Christ, all unsuccessfully. Now as we come in verse 6, we see we're moving in to this period of Tribulation. He is still chasing the woman. Still trying to destroy Israel, the people of God, still with the same agenda.

But there's more to the battle than just the dragon chasing the woman during the latter half of the time of Tribulation, and the more is what we find in verse 7. And it explains why verse 6 takes place. Now let's start with the point that will be just a simple point, war in heaven. And then we'll move to a second point, war on earth. War in heaven, verse 7. "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon and the dragon and his angels waged war and they were not strong enough and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven."

It's been going on for a long time. And that state of war is still continuing in to that period known as the Tribulation. That's been going on since the fall of Satan back in verse 4, when he swept away a third of the angels with him in his rebellion and they were thrown, as it were, out of heaven down to earth where he became the ruler of this world. He still has access to God's presence at this time, he did then from the time he was cast out, but his domain is the earth and the air around the earth. That's why he's known as the prince of the power of the air, that's why the Bible says in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 12 that his demon hordes are called spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies. And so we note that he operates in heaven as well as on earth. And he operates in heaven in a warfare against the holy angels.

Now Hebrews 1:14 says the angels are sent to be ministers of the people of God, or the children of God. And what he wants to do is thwart the angelic ministry. Whatever purposes God wants to carry out on behalf of His own, Satan wants to stop. So when God dispatches holy angels to assist Israel in the Old Testament, Satan interferes. When He dispatches holy angels to aid the children of God in the church in the New Testament dispensation, Satan wants to interfere with that operation any way he can. And so he even engages in battle with his demons in the air against these holy angels, as well as engaging himself in the development of false religion and governments that are corrupt and human philosophical systems that espouse his theology on the earth. So he roams the heavens with his demons and he roams the earth. Peter says he goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Matthew 13, Jesus said, "He comes along where the gospel is sowed and he snatches it away." As we saw this morning in Acts chapter 5, he tries to fill the heart of someone to make them lie to God, to cause them to sin, to disrupt the church, to destroy it, to bring sin and to pollute it. Paul says to the Corinthians in his second letter, a very important note, chapter 2 and verse 11, he says that no advantage be taken of us by Satan for we're not ignorant of his schemes. He's got all kinds of them by which he endeavors to entrap believers. First John 5:18 and 19 says the whole world lies in his lap. The whole world system, he controls it.

All of that is to emphasize that Satan is very active. He's been very active since his fall, very active trying to thwart the purposes of God. And usually he's not engaged in blatant evil alone, but it's

always religion that occupies him. He appears most frequently disguised as an angel of light, according to 2 Corinthians 11:13 to 15. So the spiritual war rages in the heavenlies and it rages on earth. But as we come in to verse 7 we are now in the time of the Tribulation or at least right at its beginning and we're going to see what particular form the war takes then. Very interesting.

Verse 7, "There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon and the dragon and his angels waging war..." Now what triggered this? That's the interpretative question, folks. We know there's always been war between the holy angels and the fallen ones. But what triggered this? Because there's a very interesting Greek notation here that would be worthy of consideration. The grammar, the structure of the Greek here lends to the conclusion that Satan started this. You could translate it, "There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels literally had to fight. They were drawn into a battle, they were compelled to fight."

Now there are a number of things that might have caused them to fight. But let me make an interesting suggestion. Could it be that what initiated this particular battle was the Rapture of the church? You see, we have been following through the book of Revelation and in our other studies of 1 Thessalonians, concluding that the Rapture of the church takes place prior to the seven-year Tribulation, the seventieth week of Daniel, that the Lord snatches the church away and then begins to pour out His judgment on the earth. And the church is in heaven represented by the twenty-four elders. So they're in heaven while this is going on. More people are being converted to Christ and a new assembly of believers is called together that really are one with all the rest throughout all of redemptive history. But uniquely the church is raptured. And could it be that as Jesus Christ raptures His church to take them to heaven, according to 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 18, as they pass out of this earth in the twinkling of an eye and go through the domain of the air, they are passing through the kingdom of darkness, could it be that Satan and his demons are aroused to hinder that trip to heaven? It's an interesting thought.

Now I can't be dogmatic about that, but it does pose a possibility. In Daniel chapter 10 and verse 13, and I'll try to give you a little bit of a defense of that particular interesting viewpoint, in Daniel 10 and verse 13, it says...well, we have to go back to verse 12, he said to me, "Don't be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard and I have come in response to your words." Here's an angel and he's coming to Daniel. Why? Daniel prayed in chapter 9, he poured out his heart in prayer the first half of the chapter. And God sends him immediate answer. And God is in the business of answering His saints immediately.

You come in to chapter 10 and Daniel is praying again and he's mourning and he's in very sad condition as he pleads the case of his people. And here comes this fantastic angelic being that is described in a most remarkable way. I mean, he's a man dressed in linen, girded with a belt of pure

gold of Uphaz. His body like beryl, his face...verse 6...the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of tumult." And so here he comes, and he's bringing Daniel a word from God. And he says Daniel from the first time, verse 12 again, that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself, your words were heard and I've come. But, look at verse 13, interesting, "The prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days." Who is this? This is a demon associated with the human system of Persia. Listen, friend, you must know this, human governmental systems while government has an entity as ordained by God to control people, that's the perfect place for Satan to infiltrate with his demons because then he can, in effect, rule. And so even in the land of Persia some demon, some higher power, some wicked demon in high places had moved in to the controlling influence of Persia and is here called the prince of the kingdom of Persia. And he stops this amazing angel who is described in these incredible terms, a very glorious and powerful being, and he's able to hold this angel up for twenty-one days.

Then it says, "Then behold...who came?...Michael...Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me for I had been left there with the kings of Persia." Michael is always associated with war and conflict. He is not a messenger angel, he is a warrior. He is super-angel. Now that guy, can't call him a guy, that angel who got stuck, that angel who got stuck for twenty-one days was some kind of angel. I mean, even his voice was like the sound of a tumult, his arms and feet were gleam of polished bronze, his eyes were like flaming torches. I mean this is just some amazing creature. Well that will tell you how powerful the prince of Persia was who could hold him up for twenty-one days from delivering a message, this is a real conflict. And who comes to his rescue? Michael, super-angel comes, always the task of a warrior, never a messenger, always a defender of God's people.

Why does he come? Because he wants to send this other angel on the way to Daniel. He is concerned about God's people Israel of whom Daniel represents. Such an important matter.

Over in chapter 12 of Daniel, again we run in to Michael. "Now at that time Michael the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people will arise." Wow, at what time? At that time. What time is that? That's the time of the Tribulation. It's the time of the kingdom.

Down in verse 7, Daniel has another vision. He sees a man dressed in linen above the waters of the river, he raised his right hand, his left toward heaven and swore...and so forth, and it says...he who lives forever there will be a time, times and half a time." That's one plus two equals three and a half, they're talking about the Tribulation, the three and a half years. It's in that setting, the time of the end. Verse 4, "The end of time..." The time of the return of righteousness, the time of the resurrection to life everlasting, the time of the judgment of disgrace and everlasting contempt. It's that time, the end time, the Tribulation time, the judgment time, the day of the Lord time. It even mentions in verse 11 the abomination of desolation, twelve hundred and ninety days and another forty-five days, thirteen hundred and thirty-five days as the mop up happens at the end of the battle of Armageddon stretches

on into the initial time of the kingdom.

Now notice verse 1, "At that time Michael the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people will arise."

So Michael is always seen as coming to the rescue of God's people. Go over to Jude chapter 9, and particular so in the end time, and I think the primary reference in Daniel 12 has to do with Israel, but there will be others who will need his help then as well who have come to faith in Christ during the Tribulation. But look at Jude 9, this is a most curious situation here. It says, "Michael the archangel was fighting with the devil...which is nothing new, he's been doing that a long time...and they were fighting about the body of Moses." That's so interesting. You remember what happened to Moses, don't you? Moses wasn't ever allowed to go into the promised land, he had to stand up on the hill in Moab, I stood on that very place and looked across the Dead Sea, the Jordan Valley to the backside of the mountains of Jerusalem. And Moses stood there in that place looking from Moab across to the promised land, but he was never allowed to enter because he took action, remember, in striking the rock, according to Numbers chapter 20, and it was there in Moab, according to Deuteronomy 34:5 and 6 that Moses died. And apparently when he died he died alone. He went away and he died. And God sent Michael because the devil wanted the body of Moses.

You say, "What did he want to do with it?" Well it doesn't tell us. But use your imagination. Maybe he wanted to turn it into an idol and have people worship it. Maybe he wanted to take it away somewhere so in his stupidity he assumed that God couldn't find it in the day of resurrection. Maybe he wanted to be sure Moses never did show up at the transfiguration. I don't know what he wanted to do with it, but he wanted it. Michael wouldn't let him have it. I don't know what the battle was like. Probably Satan said, "Well, you should let me have the body of Moses because he's a murderer," Exodus chapter 2 verse 12. "You should let me have the body of Moses because he...he disobeyed and he struck the rock, he's a man of sin, he's not worthy of resurrection, he's not worthy of having his body taken to the Mount of Transfiguration to be there, he's not worthy of resurrection glory." We don't know what the devious scheme of Satan was, we don't know whether he wanted to honor in a false way through idolatry or dishonor and desecrate the body of Moses or try to prevent it from rising again...whatever he wanted to do, Michael went to battle over the body of Moses.

Apparently Michael is not the equal to Lucifer in personal power. At least he's not the superior, and so he says in verse 9 that Michael didn't dare pronounce against Satan a railing judgment but said, "The Lord rebuke you." He wasn't about to engage in a battle with Satan on his own strength as strong as he is, but he called for the Lord. Very interesting.

Now in that story we noted something. Michael is called in Jude 9 the archangel..the archangel. Do you remember what it says about the Rapture? In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 it says, verse 16, "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of...what?...the archangel." That's

just a possibility but it's a very interesting one. Could it be that the archangel is Michael? Certainly, certainly could be, he is Michael the archangel and it's going to be his voice at the Rapture. Why would the archangel be shouting at the Rapture? Well could it be that he is confronting Satan and his demons as they try to thwart the Rapture? Possibly. He is certainly going to stand up for the people of God in the future, according to Daniel chapter 12. And at that period of time there will be a resurrection. We don't know. But it is possible that what triggers this war in heaven there in Revelation chapter 12 could be the Rapture. And as believers start to go up, would go through the domain of Satan and some great supernatural warfare starts to take place and Michael comes with his holy hosts in the power of God and makes sure we get where we're going. Michael always seems to be fighting for God's people...Israel, the church, and he'll stand up for all the saints at the end of the time of the Tribulation.

Now let's go back to Revelation, just file that somewhere for interest. There was war in heaven. "Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon, the dragon and his angels waged war." As I said, the Greek text indicates sort of a Hebraism here, Michael and his angels had to fight the dragon and his angels. By the way, you can compare Matthew 25:41, the devil and his angels were waging war. And the repetition here implies the force and the fury of this. You remember that after the return of the remnant from Babylon, Satan was present to resist the restoration of the nation Israel, Zechariah 3:2. And Satan came in and tried to stop the restoration, tried to stop the building, as it were, of the kingdom of Israel, and he was rebuked there in Zechariah. And it's going to happen again when the Lord comes to set up His kingdom, Satan is going to do everything he can to halt it and stop it and resist it and the holy angels are going to have to make war. And they may start that war at the Rapture and they'll have to war with him all the way through to the establishment of the kingdom.

They win the first round, according to verse 8, very clearly, and they will win the rest. They, that is the devil and his angels, the dragon and his angels, were not strong enough and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

Now the results of this battle were very, very severe. They didn't win. Michael and the holy angels win a very decisive battle. Now if this indeed is the time of the Rapture, or around that time, we assume it's somewhere around that time that the war breaks out, if it is triggered by the Rapture, the end result catapults Satan and all of his hosts out of heaven down to earth and that explains why the Tribulation is such a terrible, terrible time. Because now all the demons of the universe have hit the earth. No more access to heaven. Literally verse 8 says, "No longer was any place found for them in heaven." No longer can they come before the throne of God. No longer can they harangue about the sins of the saints.

Henry Morris writes, "With what weapons and by what tactics is this heavenly warfare waged? That's beyond our understanding. Angels cannot be injured or slain with earthly weapons, and such

physical forces as we know about are not able to move spiritual beings. But these beings do operate in a physical universe so there must exist some powerful physical spiritual energies of which we yet can only have vague intimations, energies which can propel and angelic bodies, that super luminary velocities through space and which can move mountains and change planetary orbits. It is with such energies and powers that this heavenly battle will be waged and the spectators in heaven, including John, will watch in awe. When Michael finally prevails and Satan is forced forever out of the heavens, a tremendous cry of thanksgiving will resound through the heavens." Just giving us a little insight into that war. John Milton, you remember, in Paradise Lost has a graphic and vivid description of the very battle before us.

So the casting down of Satan takes place at the time of the Tribulation. And he hits the earth with full fury. If you...if you press me on this, it...it seems as though the full fury of his arrival is right at the midpoint, but there's no reason to assume that that's exact. If the battle starts at the time of the Rapture and the Rapture happens immediately, we get through the domain of Satan, that war may go on a little while before there is triumph and Satan is cast down. It may not. The full fury of Satan having landed doesn't explode until the midpoint, but he may along with his demons arrive here before then. I mean, there's no way to know precisely when they're going to arrive, but they will be here by the time we reach the midpoint. They could be here from the very beginning of the time of Tribulation.

So clean is heaven, the angels literally mop up any loose demons anywhere. Every celestial inch of the heavens is covered, thoroughly searched to make sure not one fallen angel remains. And this is the end of the time of Satan as prince of the power of the air, he is confined for the moment to the earth. Now that takes war in heaven and makes it become war on earth. That's our second point, look at verse 9, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world, he was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him."

He is called great because he is so formidable. Back in verse 3 having seven heads and ten horns, seven heads speaking of the sweep of human government through history. Ten horns, the final form of satanic human government. He is the one in charge of all of it. He is thrown down, literally cast out of heaven. He's already been cast out once in verse 4, that was at the time of his fall but he had access back, now no more access.

He is identified, very, very clearly, the serpent of old, that's the snake in the Garden of Eden back in Genesis. He is called the devil, diabolos, it means to slander, to defame, to falsely accuse. And that's what he does night and day. He is like a prosecutor before the throne of God, trying to arraign God's people at the bar of God's divine and holy justice by accusing them sins. He goes everywhere in the earth collecting evidence. When Peter says he goes around seeking whom he may devour, I think he's going around looking for evidence that he can take before the throne of God that will cause

God to turn his back on us. That's why it's so wonderful to be reminded of Romans chapter 8, no matter how busy Satan is in doing that, no matter how frequently he harangues about us, about you and about me, no matter how much evidence about our sin he has managed to collect, and I'm sure he's got...he's got bundles of it on all of us, no matter what he does, Romans 8 simply says, "If God is for us, who's against us?" "If He didn't spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Jesus Christ is He who died, yea rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God who also intercedes for us." "So we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." The one who is our prosecutor, unendingly accusing us is unsuccessful.

He is also called Satan, this is a very common name and it means adversary or enemy. Then it says an interesting thing about him, "Who deceives the whole world." He is not only an accuser, he is not only an adversary, he is a deceiver. Throughout all of human history he has duped the world and he will continue to dupe the world even during the time of the Tribulation. Believe me, he will carry on one charade after another, convincing people that he represents truth and virtue and true religion and even God. Over in chapter 16 we'll see more about it, Revelation 16, but verse 14 talks about spirits of demons performing signs who go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. That's how the people of the world wind up at Armageddon. They are deceived into coming there by demons. Satan is a deceiver. Chapter 13 and verse 14 notes his deceit. He deceives those who dwell on the earth, this is the agent of Satan, because of the signs which he can perform in the presence of the beast. He is deceiving at every possible turn so that he can amass this great force against Christ.

Over in chapter 18 verse 23 it says, "All the nations were deceived by his sorcery." Chapter 19 verse 20, "The beast was seized and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image and they were thrown, of course, into the lake of fire." Chapter 20 verse 3, he is put into an abyss and sealed so that he should not deceive. Verse 8, he comes out at the end of a thousand years to deceive the nations again. Verse 10, and the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire. I mean, you can see it all through the book of Revelation. What he's doing during this time of the Tribulation is attacking Israel trying to kill them, attacking the believers trying to destroy them, and deceiving the whole world to set them up under his authority to engage in a great warfare against God's people and against God Himself in the form of Jesus Christ. He is a deceiver. He's deceiving right now through the philosophies and psychologies and the human systems of the world, Satan continually and always is deceiving. And in the end, he will be so successful he will pull together a world government, a world of people who come to attack Jesus Christ. He is a liar, John 8:44 says, he lures people into ruin. That is his intention.

Now verse 9 at the end, just to remind you of it and we'll move on to the next point, says that the angels were thrown down with him. And I want to make one very interesting point here. When the angels come...fallen angels, that is, the unholy angels...come catapulting down to the earth with Satan, that's only the start. If they all come crashing down some time at the beginning of the seven years, go back to chapter 9 for just a moment, back to chapter 9 verse 1, and this is the blowing of the fifth trumpet which happens toward the latter part of the Tribulation, past the midpoint. And the fifth angel sounds and a star from heaven comes down and he opens the bottomless pit with this key. Smoke billows up out of the pit and out of the smoke come locusts upon the earth. You remember we discussed this, these are demons that have been incarcerated in the pit. The pit is opened and like a locust, a cloud of black locusts, they come surging out of the pit. It says in verse 5 they're not allowed to kill anyone but they just torment everybody for five months with some kind of a tormenting sting like the sting of a scorpion. And it's so bad that men will seek death and will not find it.

So the pit that has held the temporarily bound demons is opened and so not only do you have all the demons in the air on the earth, but you've got all the demons coming out of the pit engulfing the earth. Then go down to the sixth trumpet in verse 13 of chapter 9. The sixth angel sounded and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God and this voice says release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates, here again there is the release. And look what happens. Here comes two hundred million. What are they? Do you remember our study? They are demons and this time they kill a third of the population of the world. You've got all the demons in the air, you've got all the demons in the pit, you've got these two hundred million demons that have been incarcerated at the Euphrates, and we don't know how long they've been incarcerated there. We went through that some of the options in our study. They're released. All the demons everywhere that aren't bound in everlasting chains are literally all over the earth doing everything they can to destroy the work of God, to kill Israel and the believers. It is a mess beyond anything conceivable.

So war in heaven becomes war on earth. Now let me give you two closing points. Praise for triumph in heaven. Verse 10, "I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come for the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.'" This is praise for triumph in heaven. Once these demons and Satan are all expelled permanently out of heaven and heaven is cleansed of the foul demons, there is praise, one great loud voice. You can go back to chapter 4, you have praise in heaven in 4, you have it in 5, you have it in 7, 11. You'll have it again in 15, 19. Periodically through this book heaven is praising because of what is happening. This time they're praising because Satan is thrown out. Michael and his holy angels in the power of God are triumphant.

The question is...who are these people? Who are making this loud noise? Could they be angels? Well they could be, but more likely they are glorified saints. Why do you say that? Because they say the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down. Satan does not accuse angels, he accuses

believers, right? Our brethren is never used to refer to angels. In Revelation 19:10 angels are referred to as fellow servants, but never brothers. That is a term reserved for those who are humans who are believers. So it seems that what you have here is a loud voice in heaven from believers, that would be those representing the church and those martyred saints who have gone on to glory during the Tribulation, and they are rejoicing. Why? Because Satan no longer can accuse them before the throne of God because he no longer has access. This would certainly be something satins would be happy about.

You say, "Why would they care? They can't be condemned." But they care because they want to show love to God, they want to show glory to God, they want to show their adoration and their worship, and it certainly...it certainly isn't an appropriate thing for them while they're there endeavoring to worship God with all their might and fully doing that to have their brethren on earth being incessantly accused of iniquities, and so they rejoice.

Now notice what they say, "Now the salvation...broad terms, in its widest possible sense...including the deliverance of all creation from the effects of the fall and sin and Satan, and the power, that means the full omnipotence, irresistible, and triumphant sovereign almighty power which crushes all other might to establish the millennial and the eternal kingdom, and the kingdom of our God in its largest universal sense, that is both millennially, and eternally. So now the final full and glorious salvation we've waited for, now the great full power, now the absolute and eternal kingdom, and he says, and the authority of His Christ...they were also saying that...His right to rule has come because Satan has been cast out. They know this is the first step. Out of heaven to the earth, out of earth to the abyss, out of the abyss to the lake of fire. This is step one in his move toward hell. The gate to heaven forever barred, the saints rejoice over this one who accused them day and night, being cast out. They know his end is near.

Praise for triumph in heaven then in verse 11 and 12 turns to praise for triumph on earth. And when you come to verse 11 and 12 the scene moves out of heaven and their joy to earth. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they didn't love their life even to death, for this reason rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them."

Rejoice not only over what happened in heaven, but rejoice over what's happening on earth. When Satan hits the earth with his demon hosts, he tries to destroy and slaughter all of the believing folks and destroy the nation of Israel...he is defeated. Notice that, he is defeated, "They overcame him." How? This is a whole sermon I can hardly resist preaching. How? You say they did it by incantations? No. They did it by exorcism? No. They did it by formulas? No. They did it by bindings? No. They did it by confession? No. They did it by rebuking him? No. They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb. They overcame him because their sins were covered and no accusation would stand. No accusation against the suffering saints of the Great Tribulation would stand before the throne of God as no accusation against any believer in any age would stand. It is

not that they had some personal power of their own. No, the weapons of our warfare are not physical or fleshly or carnal, they're spiritual and mighty and greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. And in us is the Christ who is our advocate, the Spirit who intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. All of the accusations against us fall on deaf ears because we have been saved by the blood of the Lamb.

Secondly, because of the word of their testimony. What is that? Because they were faithful and devoted to Christ even in a world engulfed by demons and cursed by God, their testimony never wavered. This is the idea of an ongoing testimony. They were faithful no matter what was going on around them, no matter how consumed the world was in both the curse of God and the fury of Satan, the wrath of heaven and the wrath of the pit, they were faithful. And their witness was clear. And they never equivocated.

And then he says thirdly, "They didn't love their life even to death." They were characterized we could say by justification and sanctification and perseverance to glorification. They didn't love their life even to death. They endured even death, agapao, the love of the will. They didn't love their life. They didn't will to love their own life. They were willing to die. Why did they overcome? Because they had a true faith. They had an ongoing testimony. And they endured. All evidences of genuine transformation. The true saints continue. Jesus said that, those that are enduring to the end will be saved, Matthew 24:13. So those on earth overcame. It didn't matter what Satan did. He's going to do a bloodbath on Israel and a bloodbath on the believing people of the world who identify with Christ. And all of this does not destroy the true faith that belongs to those who are redeemed. They're covered by the blood. Their testimony is continuing and they endure even death. For this reason, verse 12 says, "Rejoice." Not just for Satan being thrown down, but for Him being defeated even on the earth as well as in heaven.

And then the last word in verse 12, sort of stands alone as a warning. "Woe to the earth and the sea..." that's the whole terrestrial ball, the whole globe..."because the devil has come down to you having great wrath knowing that he has only a short time." Three and a half years, or maybe a little more, that's all he's got. Woe to the world when he hits the earth.

We understand that, don't we? He has great wrath, thumosin Greek, rage, turbulent, emotional fury as he makes his last effort against God and his plan. And he is aided by a pit that's belched out numberless demons and two hundred million of them released from the Euphrates. And all that he can possibly do in three and a half years he's going to do, and that's why Jesus said there's never been a time in the history of the world like this time and if the Lord didn't shorten the days, everybody including the elect would be destroyed.

So it's a fearsome time to come...not a time that I would like to be a part of, and nor would you. But even with all that Satan can do, he can't touch us, can he? We rejoice in that.

Father, we thank You for our time and study tonight. This is all so amazing. I mean, this world has got to be filled with historians who can't even figure out the past let alone the future. And here we are, we know all the details just how it's going to happen. Father, we thank You for this word for which we are responsible. We are responsible to so live that we might never know Your wrath, so live that we might call others to repentance and righteousness and see them delivered from the wrath to come. We thank You that we will triumph, that no accusation against us will stand, that Satan one day will be thrown out of heaven to this earth and he'll be here just a short time and he'll be thrown out of this earth into a pit and finally into an eternal lake of fire...which he deserves for his rebellion against You. We grieve that there he will be and be joined not only by his angels but by multitudes of men and women who like him rejected You. We pray, Lord, that You will call many to righteous in these days, many to holiness, many to salvation and sanctification. And we thank You that we're on the winning side, we can already hear heaven rejoicing, even though the battle hasn't started, rejoicing because he was thrown out of heaven, rejoicing because he was defeated on earth by the undying, unbreakable, invincible faith of Your own people. We thank You for that.

We thank You that Your purpose for Your church will come to pass, Your purpose for Israel will come to fulfillment, Your purpose for a redeemed remnant out of that time of Tribulation will be fulfilled. And Jesus Christ will come and set up His kingdom and reign as He should forever and ever. And we thank You that we will reign with Him not because of anything we deserve or anything we have done, but simply by grace. O Father, be gracious to many, give them a place in Your kingdom for Christ's sake. Amen.

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