

Revelation 12:7-17

Verse 7

And there was war in heaven – Although the tribulation conflict is primarily on the earth, John records the angelic battle that sets the stage for the beginning of the great tribulation.

Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war– Michael the archangel (Jude 9) is the leader of God's angelic army. He is Israel's special patron (Daniel 10:13, 21, 12:1). Michael had battled with Satan in the past (Jude 9) concerning the body of Moses. This battle seems to be a consummation of this ancient conflict.

Verse 8

And they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven – As a result of their defeat, Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven and they no longer have access to heaven. Up until this time Satan and his angels were permitted access to heaven (Job 1:6-7, 2:1-2).

Verse 9

All of Satan's descriptive titles are given in this verse:

The great dragon – Fierce, cruel, and monstrous in nature.

The serpent of old – Crafty, subtle, and deceptive.

The devil – From the Greek *diaballo* which means "accuser" or "slanderer".

Satan – Adversary.

Who deceives the whole world – As suggested by his names, Satan has always been a deceiver. (2 Cor. 4:4, 11:14, 2 Thess. 2:9-10).

He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him – This event apparently parallels Daniel 12:1 where Michael "stands up" for the children of Israel. It marks the beginning of the *Great Tribulation*. Satan and his angels turn their full wrath and hatred toward Israel and everyone on earth who worships Christ.

Verse 10 Proleptic Praise!

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.

Verse 11

And they overcame him – A reference to the tribulation saints.

Because of the blood of the Lamb – The accusations of Satan are nullified by the blood of the Lamb which renders the believer pure and makes possible his spiritual victory.

And because of the word of their testimony – They are unashamed to proclaim the gospel.

And they did not love their life even to death – Their martyrdom, rather than signaling the triumph of Satan, shows instead that they

have gained the victory over the dragon by their obedience to Christ and their shared suffering with Him.

Verse 12

For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them –

Because of the victory of the saints and also because Satan and his angels are no longer allowed access to heaven.

Woe to the earth and the sea – The inhabitants of the earth now receive Satan's full wrath.

Knowing that he has only a short time – Only 3 ½ years remain until he is bound for 1,000 years.

Verse 13

The dragon...persecuted the Woman who gave birth to the male child – Satan's wrath is now turned to Israel (the Woman of verse 1).

Verse 14

The two wings of the great eagle – This expression comes from Exodus 19:4 where God uses the strength of an eagle to illustrate His faithfulness in caring for Israel.

That she might fly into the wilderness to her place where she was nourished – Some believe the caves of Petra or a similar mountainous place will be the place of refuge for Israel. No doubt this will be a supernatural care similar to what Israel experienced in the wilderness or Elijah experienced by the brook of Cherith (1 Kings 17:1-6).

Where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent – This exact phrase is also found in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 and refers to the last three and a half years of the tribulation known as the Great Tribulation. God will supernaturally protect Israel during this time.

Verse 15

The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood – This is most likely a metaphor for overwhelming evil or persecution. Perhaps referring to a river of soldiers who will pursue Israel. Note Jeremiah 47:2-3, Psalm 18:4, and Isaiah 43:2.

Verse 16

And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth – If literal, the earth will open up and absorb the flood of water. If figurative, the soldiers pursuing Israel will be destroyed in like manner as Pharaoh's army was destroyed when they pursued Israel. Note Numbers 16:30-33, Psalm 106:15.

Verse 17

These Jews are those who do not flee to the mountains. The 144,000 are most likely part of this group. There will also be a number of believing Jews who choose to continue their testimony for Jesus.