

Series: **The End of Time**
Today's Title: **"War in Heaven"**

October 29, 2023 – *Revelation 12:1-14:20*

Objective: To help people know the conflict in the spiritual realm, which often spills into the physical realm, through leaders and ideas they promote and actions they require.

Opening prayer

We're in a study of '**The End of Time**' – which is primarily a study of the book of Revelation.

Show Timeline

We are currently living in the Church Age.

The next event on God's historical timeline is the rapture of the Church – which we believe happens before the Tribulation period.

The Tribulation period is a period of 7 years – in which God will judge the world for its sin and rejection of Christ.

The judgments during the Tribulation are announced in Revelation in 3 sets / series of judgments.

- Seal Judgments (chapter 6)
- Trumpet Judgments (chapters 8-9, 11:15-19)
- Bowl Judgments (chapter 16)

Last Sunday – we walked through the Trumpet Judgments.

Next Sunday we will walk through the Bowl Judgments.

Turn to **Revelation 12**.

Today, we're walking through **Revelation 12, 13, & 14** – and we will take a break from the judgements on the earth – and look at the ongoing battle in heavens between God and

Satan, and how the battle often spills over into the physical realm – our realm – and is fought through wars, conflicts, ideas, values, priorities of political and societal leaders – to move the cultures of the world to follow one side or the other.

This ongoing battle in the heavens is between the angelic forces of good – and the demonic forces of evil.

Today, we will also look at the work and person of the Anti-Christ, and the False Prophet.

- **Chapter 12:** God’s plan to save the world and Satan’s battle against the plan.
- **Chapter 13:** Satan’s counterfeit Messiah.
- **Chapter 14:** The proclamation of God’s judgment by 3 angels.

Now, the simplest way to understand **chapters 12, 13, & 14** is to see them built around the main characters.

The characters are “signs” – symbols of real, actual people or beings.

There are 6 characters in **chapters 12 & 13** you should note.

Chapter 12:

The woman

The dragon

The male child

Michael, the archangel of God – guardian of Israel.

Chapter 13:

The beast from the sea

The beast from the earth

The ongoing spiritual war between God and Satan. 12:1-17

Read 12:1-6

vs. 1-6 – We see the story of Israel – and many components of Israel’s history combined in this summary.

We have imagery from Joseph’s dream in **Gen. 37**.

We have a summary of Satan’s original fall from heaven which included 1/3 of the angels who fell with him.

We have a summary of the birth of Jesus – and Satan’s attempts to destroy the Jewish people throughout history, including the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:16-18).

We have a reference to the ascension of Jesus.

We have a prophecy of divine protection of Israel during the Tribulation.

Don’t look at this section as a chronological sequence of events in the end times.

It’s covering much of history – with very big and broad strokes.

The point here is to give us a wide, historical lens of Israel and Jesus – and the ongoing battle/war as the Devil has been attempting to destroy them both.

Who is the woman?

Notice, this is a “sign” (vs. 1).

This is not a literal woman – a specific person.

Roman Catholic church – believes this is Mary – this is shown in much of the art depicting Mary.

Mary Baker Eddy – founder of the Christian Science cult – claimed the woman was a prophecy about her!

Some Protestants believe she represents the Church. But the Church – in the Bible – is never referred to as ‘*a woman*’ – but as the Bride of Christ.

The woman = the nation of Israel

see **Genesis 37** - Joseph’s dream.

Israel is often referred to as a woman in Scripture.

(See: Isaiah 54:1-6, Jeremiah 3:2; Ezekiel 16:27-30, 45-51; Hosea 2)

The dragon = a “sign” (vs. 3) of the Devil / Satan (vs. 9).

The male child = Jesus Christ (see vs. 5)

Michael = Michael, the archangel of God

Read vs. 7-17

John sees a war break out in heaven between Satan and his demonic forces, and Michael and the angelic forces of heaven.

Michael and the angelic forces are victorious, and they banish Satan and his demons out of heaven – to earth.

Some believe this war broke out after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

That after Jesus paid the price for our sin – defeated death and sin through His resurrection – when He ascended to heaven, Satan could no longer accuse believers because of the atonement made for their sin – and the imputed righteousness of Christ. Therefore, Satan and his evil forces attacked heaven, but were defeated and banished from heaven – and thrown down to earth, where Peter describes his activity:

1 Peter 5:8

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Others believe the banishing of Satan and his demons happens at the mid-point of the Tribulation – which is why the 2nd half of the Tribulation – often called **The Great Tribulation** – is so intense.

Satan and his demonic forces are now exiled to earth – and they will pour out their wrath on the Jewish people and all who follow God.

vs. 12 - “But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he (Satan) knows that his time is short!”

During this time God protects Israel – from the assaults of Satan.

Next, we move from the wide, historical view – to more of a documentary chapter – providing us some details of the 2 main characters that Satan will use to accomplish his goals.

The deadly, demonic, charming world leaders. 13:1-10

In **chapter 13**, we are introduced to the **beast from the sea = Anti-Christ**, and the **beast from the land = the False Prophet**, who serves to prop up the Anti-Christ and to serve and promote the desires of the Anti-Christ.

The Anti-Christ won't be known as 'Anti-Christ'. He will be a skilled, smooth, gracious, strong, amiable, and intelligent politician who appeals to the entire world.

He will be a globalist – as he will bring the entire world under his rule and power.

It is interesting how we have seen a great increase in globalism in the last few decades.

There are political leaders – in our nation – and around the world – who truly believe we need to minimize or erase the borders of nations (literally or practically) and become 1 great society of people worldwide.

There are different shades or variations of this – some more extreme than others.

This has been a very intentional movement within public education in the United States.

If you begin to listen carefully – you will hear various politicians and public leaders speak about globalist ideas.

This is one of the great points of conflict that has risen between Donald Trump and the ‘America First’ movement – and those who are working toward a more globalist approach.

This globalist leader will rise, likely due to a great crisis – which always causes people to look for leaders (COVID) – the world will look for someone who has the answers – competence – and makes them feel safe and he will give hope – amazing hope about the future.

In **Revelation**, the word ‘Anti-Christ’ is not used – he is called “The beast” – 28 x in **Revelation**.

Other Biblical writers have used various titles for the **Anti-Christ** (Son of Perdition [NKJV] or Man of Lawlessness [NIV] - **2 Thess. 2:3** /

The Foolish Shepherd - **Zech. 11:15-17** / The King Who Exalts Himself - **Daniel 11:36-45**)

There is only 1 Anti-Christ – but through the last 2,000 years there have been – and will continue to be many anti-Christ.

1 John 2:18

“Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come.”

See Daniel 11:36-37

Read 13:1-10 – the Anti-Christ

vs. 2 - The Anti-Christ is demonic – Satan empowered and controlled.

vs. 3 - Anti-Christ – miraculous healing

See Zechariah 11:15-17

This healing will cause people to follow him – worship him – and worship Satan – since they will realize Satan is the power behind this amazing leader.

vs. 5-6 - Anti-Christ – will blaspheme God / Christ

vs. 7 - Anti-Christ – will persecute and kill Christians (“saints”).

vs. 4, 8, 12 - Anti-Christ – he will be worshiped – and demand to be worshiped.

The Anti-Christ is meant to be an aping of Jesus.

He will be an evil, demonic twist on Jesus.

Instead of coming to save, the Anti-Christ comes to kill and destroy.

The goal is to get the world to worship Satan, as opposed to worshipping God.

The Anti-Christ will be empowered / possessed by Satan.

He will work to advance Satan’s plan to destroy the people of God and the plan of God.

We've seen precursors in history to what this man will be like.

- Satan was behind Pharaoh – and his desire to kill the Hebrew slaves – who would become the Jewish nation.
- Satan was behind Haman of Persia – in the book of Esther.
- Satan was behind Herod the Great – and his attempt to kill the baby Jesus.
- Satan was behind Hitler and his plan to exterminate the Jewish people.
- Satan is currently behind Iran – and Hamas – and the other Arab states / nations who want to wipe Israel off the face of the earth!

Read 13:11-18 – The False Prophet

The False Prophet forms what many have called the unholy trinity to match the holy Trinity of God.

The False Prophet will work to bring worship to the Anti-Christ.

He will be given power – supernatural power – to heal the Anti-Christ from a mortal wound – and he will display other miraculous signs of power – so that he can “deceive those who dwell on the earth...” (vs. 14)

Much like Pharaoh's magicians we read about in Exodus.

He will cause all people to take onto themselves – the mark of the beast – 666.

In part, this is a mockery of how orthodox Jewish people wear what's called *phylacteries* during morning prayer – boxes with Scriptures inside – held on with a strap on their left hand and above their forehead.

The mark of the beast is on the right hand and forehead.

This is the number for man – mankind (vs. 18).

Those who refuse this mark will pay a great cost – probably with their life.

Those who take the mark – will not be in heaven.

The tribulation faithful worship God. 14:1-5

Back in **chapter 7** we read of the 144,000 Jewish servants of God – who were sealed / protected so they could minister during the tribulation.

You can imagine how the Anti-Christ and False Prophet would want to kill these witnesses who would oppose the Satanic schemes of the Anti-Christ – and how enraged that would make the forces of evil.

Here we see them again – but I believe this is a look at the end of the tribulation – a vision John has of a worship scene which takes place in Jerusalem – perhaps on the temple mount – which is part of Mt. Zion – upon the return of Christ.

Read 14:1-5

The 144,000 have survived – and now, along with a heavenly choir and band (?) – they sing “a new song” to God.

The purity of these 144,000 witnesses is highlighted. Not sure if they are literal virgins.

I would think this is symbolic, as ‘virginity’ is often used in the Bible as a metaphor for spiritual faithfulness.

God’s gracious warning of the coming harvest. *14:1-5*

Read 14:6-13

Another vision – and this time John sees 3 angels.

Angel #1: Proclaims a gospel message – the last gospel call!

Angel #2: Announces the demise of the world’s political system, economic system, and cultural power structures.

Angel #3: Announces the coming judgment for those who have worshipped the Anti-Christ and have taken his mark on their right hand or forehead.

John is then told to write a message of encouragement for the saints / believers – even though they are persecuted for their faith in Christ - their reward – eternal life – is near. Hold on – remain faithful!

A preview of the 2nd coming of Christ. *14:14-20*

Read 4:14-20

This is the only time in Scripture an angel proclaims the gospel.

Why? Likely due to the Church being raptured – no longer on earth.

And during the 2nd half of the tribulation, when someone becomes a Christian, they are likely martyred – especially if they are vocal about their faith.

So, there are very few Christians on earth to evangelize!

Apply it...

At the end of time, Satan will be fully unleashed, the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet will assume power and control, and faith will be tested like no other time in human history.

13:10b

“Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.”

14:12

“Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.”

Will you endure to the end?

Close in prayer