

# War in Heaven, War on Earth

## Revelation 12

The seventh trumpet has just sounded and in response the elders representing all the redeemed worship God and proclaim that His reign over the kingdoms of man has begun. The very first thing we see after this is the ark of the covenant in the heavenly temple. This can tell us that the most important aspect of the Lord's reign over man is what is symbolized by the ark – man's gracious redemption in Christ, the empty tomb, the communion of God with man, etc. The King's first act is that which is most pressing upon His mind. Even as He is about to pour His wrath upon an reprobate planet, He is mindful of His covenant with the redeemed.

In this chapter and the following two, we are given both background and insight into the consummation of several tumultuous events raging upon earth and in heaven. The seventh trumpet signals their climax and conclusion. Exactly when they began, we are not told, but this is where they wind up because from this point on, the devil's destruction and delusion are being dealt with – the King has taken His authority over man's kingdoms and has begun to reign.

*Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of*

*twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. To understand who this woman is, we must turn to the book of Genesis, to the second prophetic dream of Joseph when he was still with his family in Canaan. In chapter 37, it is recorded, *Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed: Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"**

Jacob recognized the symbols of Joseph's dream as representing the family of Israel. Thus, this woman would likewise represent this same family who is often referred to in scripture as Father God's wife. This is not Mary the mother of Jesus; remember, John starts off saying that this is a sign. However, she is certainly a part of the group.

God, through His people, His wife, has brought forth a Child – Jesus, His Son.

*And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. We'll see momentarily that this dragon is Satan. Again, John says this is a sign so what we're looking at is a picture of the nature of this horrible being. I'll*

suggest that as the serpents in the wilderness which bit the Hebrews and killed them were fiery, so is devil. Those serpents were symbolic of sin, and it was only when the victims turned their attention to the bronze serpent on the pole (the image of Christ on the cross) that they would be healed. Satan is the fullness of this plague; he is the epitome of sin. He is red because he is stained with the blood of all mankind to whom he has brought delusion, destruction and death.

In addition, he has seven heads (with seven diadems) and ten horns. There will ultimately be seven devilish empires that reign over the Hebrews – The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks, the Romans and the antichrist. Recall from our studies in Daniel chapter seven that these ten horns are those ten kings that will turn their kingdoms over to the antichrist and reign with him during the tribulation. This sign shows us that it is the devil who has been allowed by God to abusively reign over them at certain times.

*His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. We know from Job that the stars are pictures of the angelic host. Herein, we see that in his rebellion against God, he drew a third of the angels of heaven into his sinful ways and cast them down. The Greek word here for "threw" is interesting because it means "to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls".*

Satan has loyalty to no one. He doesn't care about those he perverts whether it's men or angels. His demons ended up on earth as a base of operations so to speak but, along with the dragon, have had access to the heavens as we'll soon see.

*And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. Perhaps, you remember from the gospel accounts of Christ's birth how that Herod wanted to know the moment He was born so that he could slay Him.*

*She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. In this, we see clearly that the male Child is Jesus Christ. Psalm 2 and Revelation 19 both show that He will use this rod of iron.*

*Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Flashing forward from the resurrection of Jesus and His ascension to God's throne until the time of the tribulation, here, the redeemed of Israel flee into the wilderness where God will provide for them for three and a half years. This will likely start at the mid point of the tribulation when the antichrist places the abomination of desolation in the temple,*

declares that he is god and begins to radically persecute “the woman”.

We can get some additional insight into this event from the book of Mark. In chapter 13, His disciples asked Jesus about the sign of His second coming and part of His answer was:

*For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.*

*But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect (chosen ones) from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven. (Mark 13:19,24-27)*

This says that when Jesus returns in glory at the conclusion of the tribulation, He will gather together His faithful ones who are both in heaven (the faithful from throughout the ages, the church who was raptured prior to the tribulation, those who got saved and were martyred during the tribulation) and on earth. But keep in mind that this is prophecy directed at the Hebrews. We must be careful that we don't make the mental 'slip' of letting the disastrous doctrine of substitutionalism slither in. When we keep our focus primarily upon

Israel, prophecy makes much more sense.

With that in mind, consider that phrase “farthest part of earth”. What does the “earth” (ge in the Greek) usually refer to in prophecy? It is the same symbolism as in the book of Daniel – it's Israel. At the end of the tribulation, the only believers that will be left on earth will be the ‘remnant’ of Israel.

Now we just learned that these Hebrews will be taken to their wilderness shelter on eagle's wings. Letting the Bible ‘interpret itself’, we are reminded of God's words to the children of Israel under Moses' leadership: *You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. (Ex 19:4)*

Where were they brought? Into the wilderness of Sinai where God miraculously cared for them. Lo and behold, the farthest part of the nation of Israel today includes much of this same wilderness. I'll suggest that it will be somewhere in this area that God will again shelter and miraculously care for His people through the worst times of the tribulation.

*And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth,*

*and his angels were cast out with him.* Now it would appear from scripture that Satan was fallen from his lofty position in heaven long before this for he was clearly filled with sin and engaged with destroying man even back at the beginning in the garden of Eden. Job records that Satan came before God and when asked about his activities, said that he had been walking to and fro on the earth. So although this planet became his perdition home, he has still had “a place” in or access to heaven and has used it to continue his crimes against God and all creation. But, now that ends. He and his demonic horde are defeated by the archangel Michael and his army of angels once and for all, and as a result, they are cast to the earth, the implication being that they are confined here as well. Satan is no match for Michael let alone Jesus. Jude records that they also struggled over the body of Moses.

There are actually four times in the Bible that Satan falls:

- From glorified to profane (Eze 28:14-16)
- From having access to heaven (Job 1:12, Zech 3:1) to restriction to the earth (Rev 12)
- From the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Rev 20)
- From the pit to the lake of fire (Rev 20)

This battle occurs at the midpoint of the seven-year period, as described by Daniel. *At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there*

*shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered. (Dan 12:1)*

*Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. The word for devil is derived from the verb which means defaming or slandering. Finally, the incessant accusations are silenced. You'd think that Satan would have given up after realizing his demise at Calvary. But, he's not rational, he is completely insane. Consumed by the fire of sin, he just doesn't get it, and consequently, he persists defaming you and I. Day and night he has continued; on and on and on.*

And we give him plenty of ammunition, don't we? But the issue was forever settled at the cross. Satan's rambling accusations ever since are only an annoyance to the Lord and the heavenly host. But unfortunately, that's not always the case on planet earth. We and the world too often take heed to his slandering while God calls on believers to overcome.

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. There*

are three components to our victory over Satan and his lies –

- through faith in the finished work of the cross, that is, the blood of the Lamb
- through the honest recollection of God's faithfulness in their lives, that is, their testimonies
- through the sincere desire for heaven, for the promised new life in eternity, so much so that death is only the doorway to the Lord's embrace.

*Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!*  
Heaven is elated, but...

*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.* This is the third and final woe – not only will the following period be one of God's wrath but also the devil's. People left on earth who are not among the protected remnant of Israel are going to get it from both sides so to speak. There'll be no where to turn. And Satan knows the Word; he realizes that his time is short. 'If I'm going down, I'm gonna take you all with me,' is his attitude.

*Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the*

*presence of the serpent.* Again, this is midway into the tribulation. It is why Jesus said to the Jews, *Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.* (Mat 24:15-21)

Whenever we read of eagle's wings, it speaks of God's miraculous provision for His people. In Egypt, He split the Red Sea and carried them "on eagle's wings" throughout their wilderness wanderings. (Deut 32:11) No one knows for sure where this last days hiding place is and that's a good thing. When the time comes, they will know where to go. It is a place that God has reserved and prepared.

At the end of the tribulation, when Christ returns with his saints, it looks like He will provide a way for the last of the remnant who have apparently stuck it out in Jerusalem to get to the safety of this place. Zechariah wrote: *And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,*

*Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.* (Zech 14:4,5)

Azal is a Hebrew name which means "a place He has reserved". I'm inclined to believe that it will be the same place the "woman" has been taken to and nourished for the three and a half years.

*So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.* Unlike the torrents of living water that spring forth from the innermost part of the sincere believer, this unholy quaff will come out of the mouth of the serpent. As such it surely pictures a flood of lies and deceit. People will believe the most outrageous lies.

We are also reminded of the days of Noah and the literal flood that swept the world. Like Noah and his family, the remnant of Hebrew believers will find safety in a place prepared for them.

As with other passages we've studied in Revelation and in

Daniel, "the earth" likely pictures the land of Israel. It could be that the believers who remain in Jerusalem, perhaps as a resistance to the rule of the AC, counter the lies of the dragon with their own truth. It could be that the rest of the Hebrews in Israel, though unsaved, remain loyal to their brethren and effectively counteract the lies spewing forth from the one they thought was their messiah.

*And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* Just as Pharaoh of old was frustrated in his attempts to crush the Hebrew nation, so a last days pharaoh (under the dragon's control) will be "provoked to rage". While the same types of judgments are raining down on him and planet earth as did upon ancient Egypt, he will, over the next three and a half years or so, seek to destroy any and all who believe both Hebrew and gentile.

This protégé of the dragon is the "son of perdition" also known as "the beast" and we'll learn more about him in the next chapter.