

## REVELATION 12 7:-12

*7And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them<sup>[a]</sup> in heaven any longer. 9So 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.*

*10Then 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. 11And 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.12Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! 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."*

We continue our survey of the Book of Revelation, picking up in the middle of Chapter 12. Our last message began with seeing a "great sign." The entire Book of Revelation is a book full of signs. In the very first verse of this Book we are told that it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and **signified** it by His angel to His servant John. And yet, chapter 12 begins with a **Great** sign. Of course this should cause us to take notice and pay careful attention.

The symbol is a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet. She is wearing a garland on her head of twelve stars and she is getting ready to give birth to a child. A great Red Dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns is waiting for the birth of this child so that he can consume it. The symbolism in this passage is not incredibly difficult. The Woman is Israel, as the Old Testament people of God, The great Red Dragon is the devil, but we will look a little bit more at the symbolism here, and of course the child who would be born, is a man child, and is Christ.

Of course, identifying who and what the symbols represent is only a small part of our task in studying this book. We also have to explain what they are doing and what it means.

As we discussed in our last sermon from this book the images presented here in this book are the ultimate fulfillments of the great Biblical conflict began all the way back in Genesis 3. Here we see the woman and her offspring or seed, doing battle with the ultimate seed of the serpent. Of course the seed represented here is not

the types and shadows that we see throughout the Scripture but is the antitype of all antitypes. It is the ultimate picture of the ultimate battle and thus it is of rather significant meaning.

The male child that is born to the woman as we mentioned earlier is none other than Jesus Christ and He is presented in the earlier verses of Chapter 12 as ruling over all the nations of the world. His rule is with a rod of iron, and it is a rule that is spoken of throughout the Scriptures. One of the greater debates about the rule of Christ though, is What will be the nature of this rule?

It is because of these debates about the nature of the rule of Christ that many people have issues and problems with discussions about prophecy and particularly this Book of Revelation.

Did Christ establish his Kingdom in his first advent, or is the Kingdom of God something yet for the future? I would like to answer this question by pointing out a few things that may seem rather obvious. One of the reasons Jesus was rejected by His first century audience was because the Kingdom that He was there to establish was not at all what they were expecting. They, like many today, believe that the only type of Kingdom that fulfilled the promises of God throughout the Old Testament was a physical and earthly Kingdom, with a physical throne in Jerusalem. However, this is not the message that was taught to us by Jesus. In fact, He pointed out that those who were looking for the physical reign of Christ from Jerusalem were looking in the wrong place.

In Luke 17 Jesus made one of His clearest statements about the nature of the Kingdom of God. <sup>20</sup>Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; <sup>21</sup>nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'<sup>[a]</sup> For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

The Kingdom of God is not something that comes with observation, but the Kingdom is within you. Many in the first century, just like today, miss the presence of the Kingdom because they were looking for a physical kingdom with a physical throne and a physical King reigning in Jerusalem. It is quite ironic, that they claim that the Kingdom of God cannot be present unless Christ is Physically reigning from Jerusalem. These same individuals, however, have no problem believing that Satan rules the world, even though he is not physically reigning.

While it is discouraging that so many miss it, what is just as discouraging, is those who "spiritualize" the Kingdom to such a degree that they make it of no consequence. Our text this week begins with the words that "War has broke out in

heaven." This heavenly conflict is a direct result of the fact that the Kingdom of God has come. The consequences of this conflict are very real, and they affect every aspect of our lives.

*Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup>but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them<sup>[a]</sup> in heaven any longer. <sup>9</sup>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.*

A strange thing happens when reading about the Dragon and his angels in the Book of Revelation. The strange thing is that everyone agrees as to who it is. In large part, that is because the text comes right out and tells us. Everyone agrees who the dragon is, but that is about where the unity stops in this passage. We have disagreement about who his angels are, we certainly have disagreement about who Michael is, and of course disagreement about His angels.

Let's look at this. First of all of note here, is that this heavenly conflict is not initiated by the Dragon and his angel, but it is initiated by Michael and His angels. Who is Michael? When speaking of Angels, we often classify different groups of heavenly beings. There are cherubim, seraphim, and of course there are angelic host, some tend to place arch-angels as a class of angels.

Church tradition has done this, There are some in the history of the church who claim there are seven arch angels. There are others who claim there are three. However, according to the Bible there is only one. I have had many tell me that Gabriel is an archangel, and yet the Bible nowhere calls him that. Michael is the only one ever called Archangel in the scripture, and He is actually called **the** Archangel, by Jude.

It is my contention that the Archangel is not a class of angels, but is a term which stands for Head of the Angels. Michael is the Captain of the Lord's Host, or the armies in heaven. I believe that Michael in Revelation 12 is the same leader that Joshua ran into in Joshua 5 as the Israelites were preparing to enter the promise land. Let me read from there:

<sup>13</sup> *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"*

<sup>14</sup> *So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."*

*And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"*

*<sup>15</sup> Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.*

The name Michael is a question in Hebrew and it means, "Who is like unto God?" In the book of Daniel Michael is presented as "the great prince" who is the special protector of the people of God. There is a war that breaks out in heaven in Daniel, which should sound familiar to us, and even Gabriel is not able to overcome the demonic hosts, but victory is won when Michael comes and to do battle.

Daniel 10: 20-21 reads thus:<sup>20</sup>Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. <sup>21</sup>But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

It is my contention that the Archangel Michael is a symbolic representation of Christ. He is the commander of the army of the Lord, and He is the captain of the Lord's host. The Archangel is not a created order of Angels. The Archangel leads all the heavenly armies and is divine.

Phillip Carrington writes: ***"It makes sense of the chapter, Of course if you want the Book to be a Chinese puzzle, this will not weigh with you; but you think the author...of this book intended the this chapter to have a meaning than you think it reasonable to consider an interpretation of it which removes confusion. A woman who is pictures as the Bride of the Lord bears a Son, she is the new Eve, and therefore her Son is to crush the Serpent. She is the virgin of Isaiah, and therefore He is the warrior-king. There follows a war with the Serpent, in which an opponent cast him out of heaven; the serpent then went off to make war with the rest of seed of the***

**woman. Clearly, then, the person he had first fought with was also the seed of the woman. Why drag in anyone else?**

**"The Battle Royal is followed by a choric song out of heaven, and as we have seen, the function of these choric songs is to make clear the action which is depicted in symbols. It says NOW IS COME SALVATION AND POWER AND THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD AND THE AUTHORITY OF HIS MESSIAHm and then (going on to think of the followers of Christ rather than Christ himself) They conquered him through the blood of the lamb and the Word of his witness. Now this adamantly means that it is Christ whose power has come. and that it is through His blood that victory has been obtained. It tells us who conquered Satan and how; It was Jesus, on the cross."**

*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.*

So now this war in heaven results in the dragon and his angels being cast from the heavens. This verse is an important verse in the middle of this passage it is also the reason why there is near universal agreement as to who the dragon is. It tells us.

That serpent of old, called the Deveil and Satan, who deceives the whole world is cast to the earth, and his angels with him.

The Word Satan is an Hebrew Word which means "adversary." Remember in Genesis 3:15 the Lord promised to work this conflict between the two seed lines. Throughout the Old Testament we see Satan taking this role as adversary. He accuses Job before the throne of God. He also accuses Joshua the High Priest in Zechariah 3. The picture we are meant to see is of a prosecuting attorney who goes before the judge and rails his accusation against the accused. In both cases mentioned, Job and Joshua, his accusations are of course lies, Because that is who He is, He is a liar and the Father of Lies. He slanders God and God's people.

One of the things we must always remember about our enemy is this aspect of his nature. He is a liar, but he is exceptionally good at it. If I came out and told you that the sky was green and the grass was blue, you would laugh at me and tell me I was insane. (I think, remember I am color blind) But the way Satan lies is he mixes the lies with the truth thus making them extra deadly.

"You are a sinner? (True) You are a liar? (True) God won't forgive you? (Lie)" He is a master deceiver.

We must always be on the lookout for the lies of the enemy. Our only guide against them is the Word of the Lord, guided by His Holy Spirit. Tradition will often lead us astray, people will fail us, the Lord never fails and the lies of the enemy will be exposed.

This part of the passage ends with Satan being cast down from heaven? And when he had been cast down we read

*Now have come salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ.*

One of the areas that people struggle with in regard to this passage is the timing of the casting down of Satan. When does Satan fall from heaven? I will tell you there are many Christians who are still waiting for this to happen, and that is sadly a big problem. Let me put it this way, if you are still waiting for the Messiah to come and claim His Kingdom and He has already done so, you have a problem. Likewise, if you believe that Satan is still the ruler of the powers of the air, I would contend you also have a problem.

Satan fell definitively during the public ministry of Jesus Christ. His fall culminated in the atonement, the resurrection, and the ascension of the Lord to His heavenly throne, from which HE reigns on high.

In Luke 10:17 when the 70 that Jesus sent out to minister returned it says they returned with joy, saying, "Lord even the demons are subject to us in your name." And he said to them, I saw Satan, fall like lightning from heaven, Behold I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over ALL the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

IN John 12, we see the same sort of authority discussed, where Jesus says "NOW is the judgment of this world, NOW will the ruler of this world be cast out."

In spite of these clear Biblical statements that Satan has been cast down, there are still many who claim that this cannot be, and of course they use the strong exegetical argument..."Well, just look around." I could and I have argued that when I do look around I see Christ's victory, and I see it more clear every day, but they would just scoff, but people let us not forget we walk by faith not by sight. We believe the Word of the Lord, and we obey His word. Satan has been cast down and as we have seen the result of this is one of the most awesome promises

in the whole Bible. "The Kingdoms of this World are becoming the Kingdom of our Christ."

One of the things I have not spent a lot of time talking about is why the Devil is portrayed as a Seven Headed Dragon with Ten Horns. In Daniel 7, Daniel has a vision and he describes it like this:

<sup>2</sup>Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. <sup>3</sup>And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. <sup>4</sup>The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

<sup>5</sup>"And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and *had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

<sup>6</sup>"After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

<sup>7</sup>"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was* different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had ten horns. <sup>8</sup>I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

I am not going to explain every aspect of this vision right now, but I want us to see some interesting things about it in particular that will help us as we go on in this passage. First, when this vision is interpreted, we see that each of these beasts represents a great world Kingdom, Each of these Kingdoms coincidentally, are major world powers that attempt to subdue the entire world. They are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and finally Rome. IN Daniel 2, Daniel sees his famous statue also representing these nations, but when the 4th Kingdom is reigning, God sets up HIS Kingdom which scatters the other Kingdoms to the four corners of the World.

A couple things. The Lion, Bear and the 4th beast have 3 heads the Leopard has 4. Between them they have seven heads. The Terrible beast has ten horns upon his head. These great beasts which represent the nations of the World who oppose the Lord and His Christ have seven heads and 10 horns just like the dragon in Revelation 12. I could spend more time proving this to you, but for now I want us

to catch the key point here. The judgment of this world has come. And the Dragon has been cast down are meant to be thought of together.

<sup>11</sup>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.<sup>12</sup>Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! 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."

The Dragon has been cast down and the war in heaven has been also cast down to the earth, but notice the way that the Kingdom of God must advance. We gain ground in the same way that Christ did. We overcome by the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of our testimony. And we love not our own lives to the death.

The Kingdom of God has come on to the earth, and because of this the dragon rages. The Scripture tells us that he knows his time is short. We see him rage all around us, we see it in the wars fought, we see it in sickness and disease. The dragon rages and we see it around the globe, but... He rages because he is defeated. He knows he has been cast down and his future is sure. He has been defeated by Christ, He is being defeated By Christ, and He ultimately will suffer final defeat by Christ. In Christ alone we are able to stand against the devil. The Word tells us, that by the blood of the lamb, the victory that Christ won, we are able to overcome him by the word of our testimony, We speak Christ's Words after Him, and we love not our own lives to the death. As Christ has died for us we will also give our lives for him, for he has bought us with a price. In His name alone are we victorious. Our trust can be placed in nothing else under heaven or on earth but in Christ alone. Let us rise and sing.