

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“War in Heaven”

Revelation 12:6-12

Introduction

1. God’s eternal plan for Israel as a nation cannot be neglected by serious Bible students. The nation is dramatically linked to the conflict of the ages.
2. On the basis of the Jewish character of 11:19, it is evident that the following chapter (12) follows the facts of the nation Israel. Following the dream of Joseph (Gen. 37:9-11), it is apparent that the “woman” (12:1) symbolizes Israel. The “man child” whom she brings forth (12:4) is the Messiah Jesus. He rules (shepherds) with a rod of iron. The “red dragon” is Satan (12:9). He exercises every effort to rid the world of Messiah Jesus and the nation (12:3, 4). It all fails with the ascension of our Lord (12:5).
3. The above items are “signs” in “heaven” (12:1, 2). There is a gap of prophecy between 12:5 and 12:6. When Messiah ascended (12:5), the present Church Age began (Pentecost) and Israel was set aside as a nation (Mt. 23:37-39).
4. The picture of the text (12:6) is that of God once again dealing with Israel as a nation. This is the 70th week of Daniel (9:24-27). There is considerable discussion about the time of 1260 days. They may be either the first half or the second half of the 70th week. The tilt of the matter is that Israel will be protected during the first half i.e. during the “beginning of sorrows” (Mt. 24:8). All of this occurs on earth.
5. At this, the account shifts from the earth to the stellar regions. This is another phase of the conflict with the dragon. Here is a report of Israel’s air power and is pitted against that which comes from Satan and his hosts. Two cogent features are presented:

1. THE HEAVENLY CONTENTION vv. 7-9

a. Where? v. 7

The verb “was” means to “become” or “happen to be () .” Hence the war came to be “in heaven.” This is probably not in the very presence of God (third heaven), but the second heaven (upper air or outer space).

b. Who? vv. 7, 9

1) Michael. The war () is between real persons: Michael and his angels; Dragon and his angels. This confirms that the stars (v. 4) are in fact angels. Scripture teaches that Michael is the chosen guardian of Israel (cf. Dan. 10, 12). He took a low place against Satan (Jude 9), but here is asked to make a frontal attack and he does.

2) Dragon. He is called “the old serpent.” This takes one back to the book of Genesis where his cunning and poisonous character is shown (3:1-15). Also he is the “Devil” () which shows he is the slanderer. Additionally, he is “Satan” which shows he is the adversary. A summary statement about the Dragon is that he is the “one who deceives (present tense) the whole inhabited world.” Now think of this continuous action. Satans 24 hour job is described! True believers should not be deceived by the Dragon (Eph. 6:10, 11).

c. What? vv. 8, 9

The whole battle or war is pictured in one constantive aorist verb (). The result is that for the Dragon and his angels they did not prevail (did not have power,). Consequently, there was neither a place found (aorist passive,) any longer for them “in the heavens.” Therefore the Dragon was cast into the earth. His angels were cast with him. Mark Satan’s steps down in judgment:

- 1) Cast from original place (Ezek. 28:14-16; cf. Luke 10:18).
- 2) Cast from heaven (here, cf. Job 1:12; 1 Kgs. 22:31; Zech. 3:1).
- 3) Cast into the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3).
- 4) Cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

Note: Satan’s judgment was gained at Calvary through our Lord’s death (Jn 16:11; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14).

2. THE HEAVENLY CONFESSION vv. 10 - 12

a. About God v. 10

This testimony comes from a loud voice in heaven. John heard () the voice as it spoke (). It may be a reference to believers who fill Glory (1 Cor. 15:52-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Four definite article ascriptions about God are heard:

1) His Salvation This is probably a reference to the entire scope of this word, physically and spiritually.

2) His Strength This is the word for “power” (), same as in Ro. 1:16). It is God’s mighty power.

3) His Kingdom This is a reference to His eternal kingdom. It goes beyond the 1000 year earthly reign of Christ.

4) His Power This is the term “authority” and is vested in the Messiah (Christ). The same Greek term is used in John (1:12). Surely the thought is that all opposition is over now.

b. About Satan v. 10

1) His Work Simply: he accuses (present tense) the brethren. Only here is the term used of Satan in the N.T. Let it not be so said about us that we engage in his activity.

2) His Appearance What he does is “before God” (cf. 1 John 2:1, 2). Moreover, it is by day and by night (genitive of time).

3) His Ejection The passive form of the verb points to the divine overthrow of Satan (). Glory!

c. About Brethren v. 11

Boldly the text affirms they overcame or gained a victory over Satan. This was done:

1) Because of (preposition with accusative denotes the ground) the Lamb’s blood. The blood of the Lamb causes victory! That’s why the brethren were bold.

2) Because of (same preposition as above) the word of testimony. Think of it -- they spoke out in witness. That spelled victory.

Note: Supplementary to the above, these brethren had the martyr’s spirit. This was their settled attitude as victors -- prepared to resist unto death.

d. About World v. 12

1) Those in the “heavens” On account of the victory described over Satan, there is the command (imperative middle) to rejoice. This is the only plural form of the noun heaven in the book of Revelation. Those who dwell (tabernacle) in the “heavens” show that the whole company of redeemed and angels are called to rejoice. Victory over Satan calls for this.

2) Those in the earth The verb () notes those who dwell or are settled in the earth and sea. For these men and animals, there is a “woe.” Reason for this prophetic woe -- the Devil has come down to them and has (present) great wrath because he knows (perfect,) his time to harm men is limited.

Conclusion What can be said for all of this? 1. God has a plan to deal with Satan’s rebellion. 2. The whole of the “heavens” has cause to rejoice with the victory over Satan. 3. The world should shudder knowing Satanic wrath is forthcoming. 4. Having these facts, every true believer should rejoice in the finished work of Christ and proclaim it with vigor. To God be eternal glory. Amen.