
Into Thy Word Bible Study in Revelation

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Revelation 12:7-12: “The War and Victory of Christ”

General idea: John now sees a great war between Michael and the angels of God and the dragon and his evil minions. They fought as if this evil dragon had a chance. It was the universe’s greatest mismatch, omnipotence versus arrogance, and pride versus the Way of God. The dragon, Satan himself, seeks to destroy by deceiving us to do his bidding, tricking us to think it is the best, most fun option, when in fact, all it does is devastate us, taking us away from family, opportunities, fullness, and Christ’s ever abundant love. Christ is triumphant; His blood and sacrifice prevails and is too much for Satan to handle. He can’t stand against the goodness of Christ. Thus, the dragon and his minion lost are defeated and thrown out of the Heaven.

Vs. 7-12: Mainly, this passage shows us the defeat of Satan and the victory of Christ! This can be applied to sin, disease, pride, spiritualism, or as it evidently means, spiritual warfare—a template on how Satan and evil seek to operate, a plan of the enemy. But, the bottom line is this; Christ is the Victor! His win has continual outcomes of triumph for the Christian, and judgment and consequences for Satan and those who follow him. This passage may be a depiction of the fall of Satan, the application of how he works, the battle of the Cross, or how he sought to steal the show and defeat Christ to prevent the salvation of the elect. Perhaps it is all of the above; but, the context clearly shows the prime meaning to be the battle of the Cross. Satan was just using the same old game plan as he did before, and Christ again proved victorious by His redemptive blood and resurrection. The point God has for us is this: the devil has his ways and plan and God has His; the devil has his facts and God has His Truth, The question is what will reign in you (Isaiah 14:12-14; John 12:31-33; Col. 2:15)?

- *There was war in heaven.* The ultimate spiritual warfare (John 1:5).
- *Michael.* As the agent of Christ, he is depicted as God’s messenger and the Archangel, the advocate, and guardian angel of Israel. Here, he is the agent of Christ who vanquishes Satan. Many Jews at the time of Christ believed that Michael would save them from harm in the last days (Dan. 10:13-21; 12:1; Jude 9).
- *His angels.* Those who are God’s messengers and agents, who are loyal, serve and worship Him.
- *Fought.* The battle has been waged and has been won by our Lord. The language imagery is both an epic violent conflict and a judicial ruling. In Jewish thinking, all of humanity was divided up between those who follow the

“Prince of Light” or those who follow the “Angel of Darkness.” The ultimate battle is portrayed that of classic good versus evil—God versus Satan. Although popular lore says these are equal powers, the Bible clearly shows us that only God is sovereign and Satan’s thinking he can take on God shows his depravity, stupidity, and desperateness.

- *Dragon*. A representative of Satan or actually Satan. The context shows us it is Satan. This is a reference to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. It is also a description of Satan’s ways and strategies to lead the whole world astray, and a destructive beast who seeks the total devastation of God’s people (Gen. 3; Rev. 12:3; 20:2).
- *And his angels*. Those who follow Satan and evil, demons, and other evil spiritual entities are in view here (Rom. 8:37-39).
- *Hurled down* means *exclusion* or *expulsion*. This, in context, is referring to the battle to prevent the finished work of Christ; it does not necessarily refer to the original pre-human casting of Satan out of heaven (2 Cor. 11:3).
- *Ancient Serpent* means sharpness of vision, cunning, and being malicious. It was also a Jewish term meaning hostility against God’s people. Satan’s fate was to be crushed by the woman’s seed, who is Christ. This term refers to his “crookedness”, “craftiness”, and “deceitfulness.” This name reveals the first reference to Satan in the Bible, as he stalked and deceived Eve. His intention is malice, fury, and cruelty, all directed toward God’s truth and God’s people (Gen. 3:1; Is. 27:1; Rev. 12:9; 20:2).
- *Devil*. This term occurs in the New Testament only; it is a name for Satan that comes from the Greek word “diabolos” meaning a “traducer” and “false accuser.” It is also used for a person who throws things at other people. It means to accuse, slander, and lead astray (Matt. 13:39; Luke 22:31; John 13:2; Eph. 6:11; Rev. 12:10).
- *Satan* means “the accuser” in contrast to Michael being “an advocate.” Satan is the accuser of those who are righteous. He acts like a prosecuting attorney before God’s court to those he knows are innocent. In contrast, Jesus is the Defense Attorney. This term means “adversary;” he is the Chief Adversary both to God and to humans (1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1:2f; Job 16; Zech. 3:1-2; Matt. 4:10).
- *Leads the whole world astray*. This is the character of Satan and evil; his chief goal is to seduce us away from God by any means, such as tricking or tempting us with what we want so he can distract us away from Christ.
- *Salvation... authority of his Christ* implies that the Work of Christ on the Cross is finished; He came to do the work He did, it is done and completed, and He

is the victor. He is the One who delivers and rescues us, versus Satan who does the opposite (John 19:30; Rom. 8:33-34; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15).

- *Accuser* is Satan's name in Hebrew. It is how he operates as our slanderer; he accuses and slanders those who are God's children, and whose faith is in Him. Most likely, Satan no longer is able to go before God and accuse us because he has been thrown out of heaven. At any result or rule, he does not have sway over a person of faith (Job 1:9-11; Zech 3:1-5; John 16:11).
- *They overcame.* We have atonement by Christ's blood for our sins, so Satan cannot use our sins against us although he still tries to by creating self-doubt and other tools of manipulation to deceive and seduce us. A wise Christian can stand against Satan's accusations by faith and knowledge and by knowing and trusting in who and what Christ has done; Satan's accusations have no power or merit and thus are no reason for us to be anxious about (Rom. 8:31-39).
- *Blood of the Lamb.* This contains the essential, Christian salvation message. This is an image of how Israel was redeemed out of Egypt and led into the Promised Land. It was the blood of the Passover Lamb that protected them; now, Christ is the ultimate depiction and application of this—Jesus Saves (Mark 10:45; 1 Cor. 6:20; Rev. 1:5; 5: 9; 7:14)!
- *Word of their testimony.* This infers that we have a *legal* right, by what Christ has given, to be represented by Christ; His work covers and protects us from Satan's accusations.
- *Did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.* This was Jewish saying to mean "valor" and a willingness to be martyred and to profess faith and victory to overcome fear before going to war. This was recited before a battle to show allegiance and courage (Judges 5:18).
- *The devil has gone down to you.* We have the opportunity and ability to either be influenced by Satan and evil or to turn our hearts to Christ alone. In Jewish lore, it was believed that Satan would be unleashed to fight against the people of faith during the End of Days.
- *He knows that his time is short.* Satan's authority and dominion are still under God's sovereignty; he can do only what God allows for His purpose. Satan has lost and fights like a cornered animal as well as using all the weapons at his disposal to oppose God's people and goodness. In the last days, he will become more intensely and hostile toward the people of God.

This dragon, Satan, and his agents thereof seek to destroy and manipulate us. He wants others to be seduced to put their trust in him so their eyes are not on God or His ways. He wants his arrogance and pride to be

contagious and be fuel for us, and for future Christians. When we seek what we want and forget God, or think we have a chance to do it better or on our own, he wins. There is nothing Satan desires more than for us Christians to run our lives our way, which are really his ways. He wants your church to be run by the will of people, governed by the trends of the day, and swayed by public opinion, where God's Word is kept out of reach or in the dark by overt or just neglected ways.

Take heart! The battle has been won, Satan score is zero; for God, the score is countless. The devil may have his anger and his bag of tricks, but He can't have those who are in Christ. We are given the Blood of the Lamb; we have the backing and His authority to win over Satan's ways and ideas. We can rejoice and live our Christian life fear-free because the devil can't get what we do not give him. So, don't give him anything—not your thoughts, plans, or agendas; let all of you be impressed in Christ and immersed in His Way.

The Preterist view: They see this passage as not in chronology with the previous and coming verses. Some see this as a literal war in heaven while others as a metaphor for something else. Some see this about Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Others in this camp see this as the woman's flight into the wilderness. Some see Michael and Jesus as indistinguishable, which is what the Jehovah's Witnesses believe, while others take what this passage says and believe they are representations or separate beings. The angels also receive varying meanings; some see them as the Apostles, others as demons, or a story to teach what is truth and what is false. Some see this as Satan's fall and the conclusion to his power and influence on Christians, while others see that Satan is still active. Most see Satan as unable to go before God and accuse us because he has been thrown out of heaven. At the very least, most believe Satan is limited to what he can do because of the Cross.

The Futurist view: They see this passage as the battle of angels and demons in heaven as portrayed in Daniel 12. Some see this as the beginning of the great tribulation, or in the middle, while others see this as just pertaining to spiritual warfare. Others see this as Satan being cast out of heaven while others see it as the war over the attempt to stop salvation and the work of Christ. Some see this as a template of how Satan operates and seeks to battle Christians and/or the defeat of Satan. Others in this camp see Satan nurtured by the blood of the *Lamb* and our victory over Christ. Others see this as a story to keep our faith in times of persecution from Satan or from men. *A short time* indicates that this passage is about Satan being bound during the millennial kingdom before he is let out for the final time.

The Idealist view: They see this passage as a retelling of the spiritual conflict of the previous passage in verses 12:1-6. Some see this as a play, depicting spiritually the events of how Christ prevailed with the cross and with His resurrection and atonement, while others see it mainly as the focus of the defeat of Satan. Most see all of this together and the state of the new age of the

Covenant we have with Christ. Satan's role here is seen as the accuser who seeks to bring condemnation, which Christ stopped and thus neutered his role to trick us before God and activity, but still has the power to influence us.

Apparently, Satan may have had the role to bring condemnation to humans before God, but the work of Christ stopped that. Now, only our rejection of Christ brings condemnation. In the meantime, Satan will do all he can to bring it on to believers as much as he can and as long as he can; however, we do not need to fear this with Christ in us.

The Historicist view: They see this passage as metaphor of the struggle of the Church and its conflict with heathenism outwardly and apostasy inwardly, and the victory of the Church. They set the dates as during the Emperor Julian in 361 to 363; the casting out of the dragon was the expulsion of pagan Rome being replaced with Christianity, and the Church's growth and spread. Yet, the troubles don't stop for the Church; the struggles continue both inwardly and outwardly, but the Church will prevail!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. How do you handle a great crisis? Do you panic, come alive and take charge, or what? How is the way we handle a crisis like the way we handle Satan's temptations?
2. How would you describe *spiritual warfare* to a non-Christian? What do you feel is the point God has for us in this passage?
3. Why did war break out in Heaven? What do you think could be the motivations of the dragon and his evil minions? Why do you suppose that Satan thought he had or still has a chance? How do arrogance and pride versus the Way of God come into play here?

4. Satan himself seeks to destroy by deceiving us to do his bidding. How have you seen him do this to you or to others? Why would some people think what Satan has to offer is the best and most fun option, when in fact, all it does is devastate them?
5. What are some of the things that are taken away from us when we are seduced by evil ways? How does Satan's influence still prevail in the world? How do his ways "snake" into you and your church?
6. How is the fact that Christ is triumphant help you stand against the wickedness and evil of the world? Christ and His authority and His abundance are at our disposal; what does this mean to your faith?
7. Satan's accusations have no power or merit, and thus are no reason for us to be anxious. So, how can Satan's defeat help improve your faith and perseverance?
8. Satan can do only what God allows for His purpose. So, why does God use him? How do you feel about it? How can this strengthen you, knowing that no harm can come when you are in Christ, and if it does, it is for our benefit?
9. How would you contrast the fact that Satan seeks to accuse while Christ seeks to save? Satan wants you defeated, Christ wants you triumphant, Satan seeks to wreck us while Christ delivers and rescues us, so why would anyone want Satan's ways?
10. What happens to you and your church when you seek what you want and forget God or think you have a chance to do it better or on your own? How does Satan win us over?
11. Why does Satan desire that we Christians run our lives our way? Have you ever considered that when we run our church by our will, by the ideas of people separate from biblical precepts, by trends of the day and swayed by opinion, we may be leading as Satan does? What can be done to make sure we do not manipulate our will and rationalize it as God's will when we make decisions?
12. Satan has been defeated, he has lost, and he can't have you or your church, unless you give it to him, by seeking him and not HIM. So, what can we do to stand against him and make sure that we as individuals and collectively as a church are not seduced by his ways?