

When the Devil went Down to Israel

Revelation 12:7-17

(preached Pine Grove 4/23/17; Sunday AM)

Introduction

The cause of the American Civil War did not happen overnight...

Tensions between the north and south began rising in 1860 with the election of Abraham Lincoln..

They continued to increase over the next five years, yet they never spilled over until 1865 when right there in Charleston Harbor, the cadets at the Citadel fired on Northern ships bringing supplies to northern troops at Fort Sumter...

At that moment on January 9, 1861, the war that had been raging all along on paper rose to new heights when the first shot was fired...

The war then erupted in April when an all out assault on Fort Sumter began when Confederate forces began shelling the fort non stop for 24 hours...

There are simply times when battles escalate into all out wars..

Well, we have been going through the book of Revelation verse by verse..

And two weeks ago, we began our look at Revelation chapter 12, where we learned of the war that is really the mother of all wars..

And that is the war that rages between the Lord and Satan...

It was a war that started in the garden of Eden where Satan tempted Eve to disobey God and it has gone on ever since..

We saw last week that the battles between the Lord and the devil have often escalated in history...

Satan clearly fought hard to keep Jesus from being born in the OT..

Then he fought hard when Jesus was born to try and destroy him through the actions of Herod in the beginning of the NT..

Then he fought hard to keep Jesus from the cross even through Jesus' own disciples...

And though Satan and his demons still battle today, there are future escalations of the war to come...

And these future escalations of the war will certainly come as Satan gets closer to his defeat at the end of time...

The 7 year tribulation period will certainly be a time when Satan will step up his game...

We got a little preview of that last week where we see that Satan and his demons will be doing all they can to prevent Jesus' return at the end of time to establish his kingdom..

Satan will start as a friend of Israel as his man, the antichrist, establishes peace with them...

But even that peace treaty will be the work of Satan to try and stop the plans of God...

Now, you may not remember this from two weeks ago, but chapters 12-14 are not the next events in the 7 year period...

Rather, chapters 12-14 are simply Satan's perspective of the tribulation period...

In fact, verses 1-6 go to the very beginning of time where Satan fell from his position in heaven all the way to the end of time where he will be persecuting Israel at the end of time....

Now, in verses 7-17, we get a little more detail of what Satan will be up to in the tribulation period...

So, let's begin in verses 7-12 with...

I. The Devil Is Sent Packing From Heaven (7-12)

Verse 7....

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

Now, the phrase war in heaven should get your attention...

How is it possible for there to be war in heaven?

Isn't heaven a place of peace and rest and worship and fellowship?

And the answer to that is yes...

The Bible clearly teaches that wherever God is, there you will find heaven...

Yet, there is also the clear teaching of Scripture that Satan has access to heaven...

This may seem odd to you, but the book of Job lets us know that Satan is allowed to come before the Lord..

He came before the Lord to accuse Job of just loving God because he was healthy and wealthy...

And God allowed Satan to attack Job with limitations...

We also know and have seen in the book of Revelation that Satan is an accuser who goes before the Lord all the time with his accusations against believers...

You see, the idea of Satan being in hell now is not something that the Bible teaches...

He will end up in a lake of fire, but now he spends time both in heaven and on earth...

And his aim is the same in both places...

To stop the plans and promises of God from being accomplished...

Now, it seems from these verse that Satan will escalate his war against God in heaven at the very beginning of the tribulation period...

Verse 7 tells us that John sees a great war in heaven going on between Satan and his demons and Michael and his angels..

We know from other portions of Scripture that Michael is a supreme angel of the Lord...

And so we see that as the tribulation begins, there is war in heaven...

What is the cause of the escalation of this war?

Well, I can't be totally sure because the Bible doesn't give a cause of this war, and it could simply be just a normal battle that escalates...

But I would suggest to you that the rapture of the church may be a cause of the war in heaven getting bigger and worse...

As God sends Christ to meet the church in the air and rescue them before the 7 years begin, Satan may feel his time slipping away...

The church that he has fought against so long will now be safe in heaven and therefore free from his attacks, and maybe that will be just too much to take...

He probably senses that the end is near for him..

He can read the Bible...

He can see that the rapture is a sign that his years of roaming the earth are about over...

So, he begins to escalate the war between his army of demons and the Lord's army of angels...

This time though, the outcome of the war is worse than ever for Satan...

Look at verses 8-9...

8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole [d]world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Though there have probably been lots of these heavenly battles and though the Lord wins every one, this time Satan experiences his worst defeat yet...

Because this time, his defeat leads to his banishment from heaven...

Satan is given a one way ticket to the earth..

He is cast out to head to earth to deceive the nations...

And though I can't be completely sure of this, it seems that this occurs at the beginning of the tribulation period....

Which makes sense because the Satanic influence upon the earth will be greater in the final 7 years of world history than ever before....

Which seems to be what verses 10-12 are talking about...

Let's read them...

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even [e]when faced with death. 12 For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who [f]dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

Verse 12 even says, "Woe to earth because Satan is coming down out of heaven bringing all his wrath.."

Now, there will be believers on the earth in the tribulation...

We know this and have learned this in the book of Revelation...

There will be both Jews and Gentiles who get saved in the tribulation...

These will be people who were not part of the church and were therefore not raptured out...

These will be people who will either see the rapture and disappearance of the church and come to their senses and get saved...

Or they will be people who will hear the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish preachers and get saved...

Or these will be people who find Bibles and read them and get saved...

And even though Satan will now be confined to the earth to unleash his evil, these believers in the tribulation will be safe according to verse 11...

Because they will overcome the wrath of Satan and his demons because they are covered in the blood of Christ...

And they will hold fast to their faith and have a testimony of God's protection of them...

And they will be so committed to the Lord in their allegiance to Him that they will choose death over life even when the attacks of Satan come...

So verses 7-12 simply detail the true and final fall of Satan out of heaven and show that he will be fully energized and enraged by it to go on the attack on the earth....

And that means one thing for those left on the earth...

They better look out...

And the first people that Satan sets his sights on are the people of Israel...

Now, we know that Israel as a nation will not be raptured out...

Only those who have trusted in Christ before the rapture will be removed from the tribulation period breaks out..

And Israel will not do that as nation...

Tonight, they still reject Jesus as their Messiah, and when the Lord raptures the church, they will still be rejecting Him...

Yet, we also know that the 7 years of tribulation are designed to bring Israel to repentance and faith in Christ as their Messiah...

We have seen some of their salvation already in the book of Revelation...

144,000 Jews will be saved..

Other Jews will be saved..

But it seems that the majority of Jews will come to saving faith at the end of tribulation...

So, Satan will go after these unbelieving Jews who will fall away in these final years of time on earth...

Let's see this beginning in verse 13 as...

II. Israel Is Sent Running From Their Land (13-17)

Verse 13...

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

Satan sees that his time is short and as he gets to the earth, he sets his sights on this woman that we met two weeks ago in verse 1 of chapter 12..

We identified this woman as the nation of Israel who was given the privilege of bringing Jesus in the world...

The woman was under Satan's attack in the OT as he tried to wipe them out before they could give birth to Jesus...

The woman was under attack as Jesus was about to be born...

Yet, the woman has been largely ignored by Satan ever since...

Most of Israel's trouble since the birth of Christ is simply God's judgment upon them for their rejection of their Messiah..

But now that the Lord moves to save them at the end of time, they get the attention of Satan again...

In the beginning of the tribulation period, Satan comes to them as an angel of light in the form of the Antichrist who makes a peace treaty with them...

But the peace treaty only serves Satan's purposes of allowing the Antichrist to rise to world power...

The peace treaty makes him a name in the world, but it also keeps the nation of Israel out of his way as he rises to be world dictator...

Now, midway through the tribulation period, the nations that love the Antichrist so well will begin to turn on him..

And many of these armies will collide in the land of Israel to fight against the Antichrist...

If you will come the next few Sunday nights we will talk about the details of this in the book of Daniel...

But long story short is this...

As the nations turn against the Antichrist at the midpoint of tribulation, the Antichrist turns against Israel...

So, how does the Lord respond to Satan's escalation of the war of the ages?

Verse 14...

14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she *was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the [g]presence of the serpent.

Now, we are in a very symbolic section of the book of Revelation and we see more symbolism here..

As God uses the symbol of an eagle that will rescue Israel out of their land and take them to the wilderness where the nation of Israel will be cared for by God for a time, times, and half a time...

So, what are we seeing here in this symbolic picture of this time in the tribulation period?

Well, let's start with the easiest one first...

A time, times, and half a time is another way of saying 3 1/2 year...

A time is one year...

Times is two years..

So we have 1 year plus 2 years plus a half a time, which is equal to half a year...

So we have 1 year plus 2 years plus 1/2 year, which equals 3 1/2 years...

This lines up with what we saw in verse 6 of this same chapter where God told us that the woman was nourished for 1,260 days...

Which equals 3.5 years...

So, we know that the persecution of Israel by Satan will go on for 3 1/2 years...

However, Israel will be safe in the wilderness...

The wilderness for Israel was always the area to the east of Jerusalem...to the east of the Jordan River and east of the Dead Sea....

Here are some picture of what the wilderness of the Middle East looks like..

And here is a map of the area...

The Wilderness of was really in the land of Moab, Edom, Ammon in the OT...

Here is a modern day map of this area, and you see that the wilderness is now in modern day Jordan and Syria...

I want to put a passage up from the book of Daniel that describes what the Antichrist will be doing in these final days...

Daniel 11:40-41..

40 "At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through. 41 He will also enter the [aw]Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.

I show you this verse and we will talk about it more a few Sunday nights from now, but this is a simple picture of the actions of the Antichrist at the end of time...

He will be fighting off many countries that begin to turn against Him in the final 7 years of the world...

And he will fight many off because he will be empowered by Satan, but there are 3 nations that will not fall to the Antichrist..

And according to Daniel 11:41, those 3 nations are the Edom, Moab, and Ammon..

Now that is interesting that these nations won't fall to the Antichrist because these are 3 nations that make up the wilderness area east of Israel...

The present day countries are Jordan and Syria...

And it seems that though many of the nations of the area will fall to the Antichrist, these nations won't and the reason they won't is that God is stashing Israel there to protect her from Satan...

Now, how does she get there?

Well, God carries her there on the two wings of the great eagle...

Is this a real bird that picks up the nation and carries her there?

No this is symbolic language...

I don't think it's a real bird...

I also don't think this is a reference to America as the great eagle...

So many American preachers have taught that error due to their obsession with finding America in the Bible...

I personally don't see America on the side of Israel when the tribulation period is underway and maybe not even before it starts...

In fact, I think America will be crippled by the rapture if it hasn't crumbled before that...

So, this eagle isn't America...

All of these references in Revelation point back to the OT anyway...

The Wilderness...

The fall of Satan...

The birth of Christ...

The rise of the Israel...

There is a passage in the book of Deuteronomy that I think applies here...

Deuteronomy 32:9-11...

9

“For the Lord’s portion is His people;

Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.

10

*“He found him in a desert land,
And in the howling waste of a wilderness;
He encircled him, He cared for him,
He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.*

11

*“Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
That hovers over its young,
He spread His wings and caught them,
He carried them on His wings..*

We also see this symbolism in the book of Exodus 19:4 as God speaks to how he rescued Israel out of the land of Egypt...

19 In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, [a]on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. 3 Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.

In the case of God's rescue of Israel from Egypt, it wasn't a literal bird or America that rescued them from Egypt..

Israel simply walked out the land with God sheltering them under his wings..

In my opinion, this escape to the wilderness will simply be another exodus from the land probably on foot and in cars..

The flight into the wilderness on eagles wings may simply be God's supernatural protection of them as they flee from the land of Israel...

And so Israel will escape as Satan closes in on them working through the Antichrist...

And God says that he will nourish them in the wilderness...

Clearly, there isn't a Way Mart in the wilderness...

Clearly, they wont be able to take enough supplies to last for 3.5 years...

So God will supernaturally provide for them in the wilderness...

Does manna from heaven sound familiar?

It should...

God has provided for his people before in the wilderness and he will do it again...

However, Satan will not go quietly once Israel runs to hide...

Verse 15...

15 And the serpent [h]poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. 16 [i]But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon [j]poured out of his mouth.

As Israel hides in the Wilderness, the devil tries to flush them out...

HE sends a flood into the wilderness...

Now, I am not sure what this is...

IT could be actual flood that strikes the wilderness, but I see it as a flood of an army that is sent to the wilderness to find and kill Israel...

If that is the case, the earth is going to open up and swallow this army before they get to them...

Is that a problem for the Lord?

How did the Egyptians die and they pursued Israel?

The Red Sea parted and then collapsed on them...

As this army approaches Israel, the earth opens up and swallows them...

How does something like that happen?

Maybe it is one of the global earthquakes that God is sending on the earth that cause the earth to split and destroy this army of the Antichrist....

I really don't know what this is...

I just know that Satan won't be able to get to them wherever God is hiding them....

Now, let me offer you this which is nothing more than speculation but it is interesting...

Here a picture of the hidden city of Petra...

Petra is a city in Jordan that is built into the rock walls..

IT has a treasury building, a monastery and numerous rooms in the rock...

Many people feel this may be the place where the Lord sends Israel to protect her for 3.5 years at the end of time...

People have even taken Bibles and hid them all over this area in hopes that Israel will turn and read it and get saved while they are being protected from Satan here..

It is an interesting theory and maybe the flood is an actual rain that Satan uses to try and destroy Israel...

That would be possible here but not likely...

And besides, this is only one possible theory of where Israel would be protected for 3.5 years...

It could be anywhere in the wilderness...

All we know is this...

Satan will try his best to get to them where God takes them but they will always be right out of his reach...

However, Satan don't just sit around and wait in hopes of getting to Israel...

Verse 17...

17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her [k]children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Unlike a cat who can't get to the mouse in the hole in wall but waits outside very still, Satan leaves the mouse and looks for other food to devour...

So, he leaves the useless attack in the wilderness and heads elsewhere to attack any other saints in the world...

Not all believers in the tribulation will be Jews, so Satan will simply go after any belief that he can get his hands upon...

And he does that for the remainder of the 7 year period..

We will see more of that in the chapters to come...

Conclusion

So what can we take from today?

#1 - Satan is relentless.

As you fight against your flesh and the spiritual force of darkness on this world, there is never a time to let your guard down...

The moment you think you have it under control, Satan uses that pride to trip you up..

The devil is determined, and he seeks destruction anywhere and everywhere he can find it.

As long as you are a believer, you are not immune from his attacks...

Though he is powerless to take your salvation, he can ruin your life and your testimony...

You fight an enemy that never tires...

He went after Adam and Eve...

HE went after Israel..

We went after the baby Jesus..

He went after the cross..

He goes after the word of God and the people of God today...

And he will return to persecute Israel in the future...

He never tires in his pursuit to trip up the plans and people of God...

#2 - Christ is our rescue.

Since in your own power will never outlast the devil, you better do today what the people of God will have to do when Satan steps up his attack in the tribulation...

I will remind you of their strategy in that day..

Verse 11...

11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even [e]when faced with death.

Our help against the enemy is really 2 fold...

First, we must cover our lives with the blood of Christ...

One of Satan's greatest weapons is guilt...

The guilt of past and present sins...

And he uses it against people all the time to put them under his thumb..

The guilt of sin can only be removed through the forgiveness of sins...

And the forgiveness of sins only comes through through the blood of Christ shed on behalf of guilt sinners...

You need to fight against Satan by removing the guilt that he will constantly uses against you...

Second, we refuse to love this life...

Another great weapon of Satan is to convince people that this life is all that matters...

This cause people to fall into all sorts of sins of selfishness, pleasure, and pride...

If Satan can convince someone that this is all there is, then he can have his way with that person...

That is why it is so important to get our eyes off this life and on the life to come...

The people of God in the tribulation will make it through Satan's attack because they won't be in love with their life even when they are faced with death...

If that will fend off Satan's attacks then when his power is at its worst, it will certainly help us today....

You must fall out of love with this life in order to fall in love with the Lord...

You can't serve two masters...

You must choose to love the Lord or the world but it can't be both...

Today is the day for someone anyone to break up with this world and the god of this world

The world is the worst kind of date...

It will promise you ease but it will deliver heartache...

Today is the day to end your love affair with the things of the world and fall in love the things of God...

If you want Satan off your back, he cuts the straps that have him tied on...

Cut out your love of your life and this world and turn in faith to Christ...let us pray.