

Revelation 12 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 12 of Revelation has been a serious *bone of contention* between Bible scholars and students for years.

There have been many questions over *how to interpret* the visions John has in this chapter and how to place it in the overall Outline & Chronology of the Book.

You'll remember how we've seen that God keeps His redemptive focus on one group at a time.

Right now, that focus is on the Church.

But God has several promises yet to fulfill to the Jewish people and nation, so He must needs shift His redemptive focus *back to Israel*.

Before He can do that however, He must remove the Church; which is what the Rapture is all about.

The Tribulation is a 7 year period that follows the Rapture, in which God switches His redemptive focus back to Israel – and prepares them as a nation to experience the fulfilling of all His promises to bless and prosper them, which will be realized in what we call the Millennium.

Daniel 9 contains an interesting timeline and timetable for God's dealing with Israel.

As we read Daniel 9:24-27, we see this timetable divided into two sections that total 490 years.

Historically, we know that the first section of 483 years has been fulfilled down to the very day.

But Daniel said that there would be a gap of undetermined length between the first phase and the last phase of 7 years.

This leaves us with the impression that the nation of Israel is rather like a spiritual stopwatch with only 7 seconds left on it till it counts down to "0" and the end is reached.

What's interesting is that it seems the devil sees it this way also.

He knows that his fate is tied to the nation of Israel and the existence of the Jewish people.

They are his *bane*. So he has ever angled to try to wipe them out. Anti-Semitism is a *mystery* that has troubled many historians and

sociologists.

There seems no rational explanation for why the Jewish people have faced such virulent and consistent hatred throughout their history by the other peoples of the world.

At its root, anti-semitism is demonic, inspired by Satan to rally the people of the world against the Jews in the hopes of wiping them out.

If the Jews are eradicated then God's word fails, and the end He has ordained is in jeopardy – and maybe, just maybe, Satan's bid at rebellion and usurping the throne of God has a chance for success.

Now, of course, we know this is absurd!

But the devil has bought this lie and continues to resist the will of God.

This is why Satan is such a good liar – he's bought his own lie and propaganda.

His convinced himself his destiny is to sit in the highest place as the Almighty.

Right now, there's just one thing that stands in his way – Israel, the Jewish people.

My friends, this is the *real* explanation for why there's trouble in the Middle East today.

Satan has stirred up the nations of the world to oppose and oppress Israel.

Why does the United States stand almost alone in it's support of Israel?

For one simple reason – because this nation was built on the Bible – and foundational to the Bible is the *Abrahamic Covenant* which says that those who bless Israel will be blessed, and those who curse her will be cursed.

Fortunately, God has graced us to *generally* have leaders who let this truth guide their foreign policy as it relates to Israel.

But woe to our nation if our leaders forsake it.

Ch. 12 is John's vision of the classic & age-old conflict between Israel and the devil with its consummation in the Last Days.

The reason he is given this vision at this point is because now that

the mid-point of the Tribulation has been reached and things are accelerating toward their climax in the Return of Christ, two very important junctions are made in God's dealing with the nation of Israel and with His treatment of the devil. So while what John sees here speaks of the future, it begins with an image that is deeply rooted in the past.

CHAPTER 12

¹Now 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.

John speaks of 7 "signs" in Revelation – this is the first.

The word refers to something supernatural that stands as an indicator of momentous events to come.

This first sign is called a "*great sign*."

And there we have the word "*mega*" once more.

I ran a search and discovered that this word "*mega*" is used *75 times* in Revelation, far more than any of the other books of the NT.

John's repeated uses of this word points up the fact that his visions weren't some kind of cloudy dream or abstract montage of confusing images.

They were *clear visions* granted him by God in a cogent form so he could record them and pass them on to succeeding generations.

The first sign John saw was a woman clothed in the radiant light of the sun.

The platform she stood on was the moon – and woven into her hair was a garland, or ribbon, strung with 12 stars.

In the midst of all the debate that's ensued over the meaning of what John saw, interpreting this vision really isn't all that difficult because it's a clear allusion to well-know Biblical idioms and stories.

This woman is clearly a picture of the nation of Israel.

First of all, in terms of visions, women are consistently used of *religious systems*. [\[1\]](#)

That's clear just by looking at Revelation itself.

- *Jezebel* is associated with a religious system of false teaching in 2:20
- The *Great Harlot* is associated with false religion in 17:2
- The *Bride* is associated with the church in 19:7-8

Second, the reference to the sun, moon, and 12 stars finds a clear reference to the dream of Joseph in Gen. 37:9-11 about his father Jacob, the sun, his mother Rachel, the moon, and the 12 stars, representing his brothers, the patriarchs of the tribes of Israel.

Third, the prophets regularly referred to Israel *as a woman*. (Isaiah 54:1-6, Jeremiah 3:20, Ezekiel 16:8-14, and Hosea 2:19-20). [\[2\]](#)

Fourth, Isaiah said that Israel's *future glory* would be like that of the sun.

Isaiah 60:1-3

- 1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.**
- 2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.**
- 3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.**

2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

As we'll see in v. 5, it's clear this child is Jesus.

The pain she cries out in refers to the travail of Israel under the Roman yoke.

The people were crying out to God for deliverance, very much as they had when in bondage in Egypt.

There was a high level of expectation on the part of the common people that the messiah was about to come – the problem was, what they were looking for was a military and political conqueror, not the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world.

Still, they were in great distress and cried out in agony to be delivered.

3And another sign appeared in heaven: . . .

John now sees another –a *different* sign.

The word “another” means *of a different kind*.

The woman of vs. 1 & 2 represents Israel through whom the Messiah came.

She is clothed with glory and is seen as the focus of God’s redemptive plan.

But what John sees now is just as great a sign, only it speaks of *horrific evil*, not glory.

behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

V. 9 makes it clear that the dragon is none other than Satan.

John describes him as *fiery red*.

In Rev. 6, fiery red is the color of the 2nd horse who goes forth to take peace from the earth and to promote murder, war, and mayhem.

Red is symbolic here of bloodshed, death, the destruction of life.

It stands as a fitting color for the devil because as Jesus said, he is a murderer and comes only to kill and destroy.

It’s interesting that the image of the dragon is one that has permeated almost every ancient culture.

So much so that some wonder if there wasn’t at one time an animal that approximated the appearance and characteristics of the legendary dragon.

Mythologically, the dragon is a sly, cunning, and intelligent creature whose aim is to steal, kill and destroy what belongs to man.

Dragons are universally held to be the *epitome of evil* – and if not resisted steadfastly, will actually entangle men and women in accomplishing *their own destruction*.

John sees this dragon with 7 heads each head bearing a crown, and ten horns.

We could chew up a lot of time at this point by doing some cross-referencing to the Book of Daniel for he also speaks of a great & evil beast with heads and horns.

Let me summarize what all this points to.

From comparing this verse to Rev. 13:1 and Dan. 7:7-8, 24, what we're seeing is Satan's manifestation in the person of the Antichrist who will come to reign over the ten-nation confederacy that comprises a revival of the Roman Empire, as is foretold in Daniel 9.

But in rising to power, the antichrist uproots and overthrows 3 of the 10 nations – leaving 7, who then become his power base during the Tribulation.

Horns are symbolic in scripture for *earthly powers – nations; governmental systems*. The 10 horns represent 10 nations.

But in its final form, the *Revived Roman Empire*, under the leadership of the antichrist, who will be possessed by the devil, the dragon, will be comprised of 7 rulers, symbolized by the 7 heads and 7 *royal* crowns.

Both Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 show how Satan likes to stand behind the throne of earthly kingdoms.

During the Tribulation, he'll come out from the shadows to actually rule in the person of the antichrist.

4His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. . . .

Once again we see *stars* used as an idiom for angels.

In v. 9 the dragon, who's revealed as the devil, is spoken of *with his angels*.

John is referring here to the fall of Lucifer and those angels under his influence who joined him in his abortive rebellion against God.

They lost their position among the heavenly host and were cast out, to become the demons; Satan spiritual agents to continue the war with God by attacking those who bear God's image.

. . . And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

The devil knew that the crucial and critical element in all God's plan to liberate Earth from the Curse of sin and to reverse the effects of the Fall, was to invade Earth in the Person of the Messiah.

Abraham was the man God originally singled out to be the one through whom a nation would come which would prepare the stage for the Messiah.

It was through Abraham's descendants that the nation of Israel would be birthed, and it was from that nation that the Messiah would emerge.

Satan watched the development of God's plan and sought to thwart it at every opportunity.

- He filled Cain with envy and hatred for Abel and moved him to kill him, hopefully putting an end to the promise of a Deliverer.
- He polluted the human race with such evil and violence that it led to the flood – and only 8 were deemed worthy to escape.
- Satan tempted Abraham to forgo God's plan by having a kid with Hagar and then allowing his wife Sarah to enter the harem of 2 pagan kings.
- He motivated Esau to kill Jacob, the son of the Promise.
- Satan gave Pharaoh the idea of killing all the Hebrew male babies.
- The devil stirred up King Saul to kill David, through whose descendants the promise of the Messiah had been promised.
- He inspired Haman to try to kill all of the Jews in the Persian Empire – and the plan almost succeeded!
- In 2 Chr. 21-22 we learn that the devil almost pulled it off and ended the Messianic line when the descendants of David were reduced down to one little boy – Joash, who had to be kept in hiding for 6 years!
- After Jesus was born, Herod sent his troops to kill all the young children of Bethlehem.
- In Luke 4, the people tried to kill Jesus, for doing good!
- In Matthew 4, the devil tried to kill him by convincing him to throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple.
- Then, at the Cross, the devil thought he'd accomplished his objective. But his rejoicing was short for the Cross proved to be the lodestone, the catalyst that began the unraveling of his plans.
- Unsuccessful in his bid to kill Jesus, he's reverted to his prior strategy of trying to wipe out Israel, for he knows the nation of Israel is crucial to God's prophetic plans.

- If there's no Israel, then God's plans can't go forward.
 - So we have the destruction of the nation in 70 AD at the hands of the Romans.
 - There's the renewal of that destruction in the mid 2nd Century.
 - There's the brutal treatment of the Jews in all the places they have wandered – general anti-semitism.
 - The Inquisition, Hitler's Final Solution and the pogroms in Russia were all just further attempts by the devil wipe out the Jews.

Today, the knee-jerk hatred of the Jews and of Israel by the Muslims is nothing less than the age-old tactic of the devil to enforce his domination of Planet Earth and forestall the emergence of the Kingdom of God.

Yet despite all of the devil's hatred and clever strategies – God's plan goes forward.

5She 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.

Interpreting this isn't difficult – this is clearly a reference to the Messiah.

Psalm 2:9 and Rev. 19:15 tell us He will rule the nations with a rod of iron.

The "she" here is the woman of vs. 1 & 2 – Israel.

Jesus was a Jew and was born as one of the nation of Israel.

Despite the devil's attempt to kill Him, Jesus was victorious and ascended into heaven.

But what happens to the woman?

6Then 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.

V. 5 refers to the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ – and event that took place nearly 2000 years ago.

V. 6 speaks of something yet future.

Vast spans of time between two sequential prophecies are *common* in the Bible.

One of the most notable is in Daniel 9:24-27 – which refers to this very same set of events; the birth of Christ, and God’s re-starting of the prophetic clock for the last 7 years.

The 1260 days of v. 6 refers to the last half of the Tribulation.

We already saw the first half in ch. 11 and the career of the two witnesses.

When their 1260 days end, the last 1260 commence.

Their witness for Christ has resulted in a remnant of Israel coming to faith in Jesus.

It is this remnant that is in view here.

This is believing Israel which at the mid-point of the Tribulation, realizes the antichrist is NOT their Savior, but that Jesus is.

The message of the two witnesses will accomplish it’s God-intended purpose and they will come to faith in Christ.

Rejecting the antichrist as an imposter, they will then have to flee his wrath at their rejection.

This remnant of believing Jews will find a place of refuge in the wilderness.

This place will have been prepared for her by God.

She will remain safe there for the duration of the Tribulation.

Because of what we find in Isaiah 16, many Bible students believe the place of refuge for this remnant is the city of Petra in Jordan, in the ancient land known as *Moab*.

- 1 Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, From Sela to the wilderness, To the mount of the daughter of Zion. [Sela is another name for Petra] . . .**
- 3 Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; {This is a picture of great stealth} Hide the outcasts, Do not betray him who escapes.**
- 4 Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler. For the extortioner is at an end, Devastation ceases, The oppressors are consumed out of the land.**

Petra is an interesting and provocative location to consider as the fulfillment of this prophecy because access to it is limited to a 12

foot wide canyon!

It's buildings, which are over 2000 years old are still standing because they are carved right into the stone of the hills.

If this hiding place is meant to be a refuge against further attacks from the antichrist, then it would be an excellent strategic choice.

While there've been rumors over the last 20 years that some Christians were stock-piling food at Petra for this event of the remnant's flight, I've not been able to verify this and find it unlikely since Petra lies in Jordan and is under the control of the Jordanians.

They would hardly allow such use of this well-know and well-visited tourist destination.

It's not necessary for there to be stockpiles of food anyway.

V. 6 says that God has prepared this place for her.

The word for *prepared* is the same one Jesus used in John 14 when He said he was going to prepare a place for us in heaven.

If God could provide manna and water for 40 years in the wilderness, He can supply His people with the same for only 3½ years.

John now has a vision of *why* Israel will have to flee to her refuge in the wilderness.

7 And 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 in heaven any longer.

How are we to understand this – when does this take place?

Does this describe some past event, when Lucifer first rebelled and became Satan? Or is this yet future?

In Job 1 we read how the devil appeared before God in heaven.

He said he'd been walking around on the Earth and now stood before the Holy One to present a challenge.

Satan then went on to lay some heavy accusations against that righteous man Job.

So even after his initial revolt and fall from his position as the “anointed cherub who covers”, as it calls him in Eze 28:14, the devil had access to heaven.

But there is coming a time when Satan will no longer have access to heaven.

He will no longer be able to stand before the throne of God and accuse God's people.

He and all his demons will be locked out!

You see, as God is preparing to now bring His Kingdom and rule to Earth in a visible way, He moves to purge heaven of all presences of evil.

His plan is to rid heaven for Satan, and then to rid Earth of him too.

The noose is getting tighter & tighter round the devil's neck.

Notice God's agent in dealing with the devil – Michael and the holy angels.

God uses one of the chief or *archangels* to lead the campaign of banishing the devil and his demons from heaven.

Let's play a little game –

What's the opposite of Up? In? Black? Light? Good? God?

God *has* NO opposite. The devil is certainly *not* the opposite of God.

Why that is his very desire – to be like the Most High; if he were God's opposite. He *would be* like Him.

But he's not and never will be like God because Satan is a created being.

The closest opposite we can find for him is Michael.

In Daniel 12:1 we read this –

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.

This is the mid-point of the tribulation and marks the beginning of the final 3½ years.

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.

The dragon is here clearly identified as none other than the devil, the serpent who slithered around in the Garden of Eden and suggested to Eve an alternative to God's good will.

He is also called, "the devil & satan."

The word "devil" comes from the Greek word *diabolos* and means slanderer, accuser; one who defames.

In v. 10 we see that this is precisely what he does.

The word "satan" means *adversary*.

The Bible refers to 4 different falls for Satan. [\[3\]](#)

- From his role as anointed cherub to the adversary (Ezekiel 28:14-16)
- From having access to heaven to restriction to the earth (Here)
- From the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20)
- From the bottomless pit to the lake of fire in the final judgment (Revelation 20)

10 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. **11** 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.

This loud voice has to be from the redeemed because it refers to Satan as the accuser of "our brethren."

That's a title reserved in scripture for those of the household of faith.

Of course, it's not hard to imagine the joy that will fill heaven with the devil's been finally booted from there for good.

If you've every had a really nasty and oppressive houseguest, you know how good it is when they finally leave.

Such will be the rejoicing of heaven when the devil is finally banished.

Of course, the hosts of heaven see this exile of the devil as the *first phase* of confining him altogether and the prospect of that is just

too good.

Regarding this identification of the devil as our accuser and how we overcome him, that will be my text for Sunday, so I will leave more comment till then.

12Therefore rejoice, 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.”

Heaven may rejoice at Satan’s eviction but heaven’s gain is the earth’s loss.

The devil now sees the writing on the wall, if I may borrow another image from the prophecy of Daniel.

Being kicked out of heaven has dealt the devil a serious setback to his plans of usurping God’s throne.

He knows his loss of place is tied directly to the victory of Christ at the Cross, and that reminds him of his failed attempts to destroy Israel.

Once more, he becomes enraged at her continuing existence and goes forth in great anger to annihilate her.

Vs. 7-12 have been kind of a parenthetical vision John was given to help explain what’s going on in v. 6 – which he returns to now . . .

13Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. **14**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.

This repeats and amplifies what John saw and reported in v. 6.

The “time and times and half a time,” of v. 14 *equals* the 1260 days of v. 6 and helps us realize where talking, not about some *symbolic* period of time, as some interpreters of Revelation want to say, but a literal period of 3½ years, the last half of the Tribulation.

In Israel’s trip to her refuge in the wilderness she is *given the wings of an eagle*, meaning her escape there will be *swift and sure*.

In Exodus 19:4, God said that during the Exodus from Egypt, He

gave the Jews “eagle’s wings” and brought them out with a mighty hand.

Israel’s departure from Egypt was indeed miraculous – so will be this last day’s flight into the wilderness.

Some modern Bible students have proposed that this is a massive airlift by the Israeli airforce or possible a collection Christian groups who band together to assist their Jewish brothers and sisters at this crucial juncture of the Tribulation.

However it’s accomplished, the point is, the devil attacks Israel, but the attack is once again aborted by the divine intervention of God!

15So 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. **16**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.

It’s clear that the remnant of Israel which flees is one step ahead of the devil.

The reason for this becomes clear when we take a look at what Jesus said in Matthew 24:15-25

15“Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation,*’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), **16**“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. **17**Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. **18**And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. **19**But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! **20**And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. **21**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. **22**And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those

days will be shortened.

23“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. **24**For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. **25**See, I have told you beforehand.

These words will be well read and understood during the Tribulation. They will be the constant message and counsel of the two witnesses who will oppose the antichrist and his bid to be dictator of the world.

When Satan is finally banished from heaven, he comes to Earth and possesses the antichrist.

He then marches into the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, enters the holy of holies and declares himself God, demanding everyone worship him and submit to his plan for world domination; this is the abomination that brings desolation.

But the two witnesses have urged the Jews to watch for this and to realize when they see it that it’s proof the antichrist is a liar and demon, not their Savior.

The believers know this is the trigger to get out of Dodge and head for the hills – literally!

Now, when you’re in Jerusalem, which is located on the highest ridge of that area, the only direction to go to find hills that you can actually hide in is to the SE, in the direction of the Dead Sea, and to the east of it, the region of Moab, in which Petra is located.

Petra is in the hills, literally carved into the hillsides and cliffs.

I believe that this event of the abomination of desolation proves so powerful a testimony to the Jewish people that there’s a *mass conversion* of virtually the entire nation in fulfillment of God’s promise to reveal Himself to them and bring them to faith.

In Romans 11:25 & 26 we read this -

25For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

26And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “*The*

Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

The ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists we read about in ch. 7 along with the two witnesses will have prepared the soil well for this mass conversion among their countrymen.

Therefore, when the antichrist declares himself God, the Jews will see it as a great betrayal, put their faith in Christ, and then jam out of town toward the hills in the wilderness.

When the antichrist emerges from the temple, he finds Jerusalem virtually a ghost town and is told the Jews have fled in a mass modern-day Exodus.

He understands this as their national rejection of him and pursues them to wipe them out.

This passage in Revelation describes the fury Jesus told the Jews to flee from.

Just how we're to understand this *flood of water* out of the serpent's mouth is uncertain.

But we may have a most excellent clue in the words of Psalm 124

- 1 "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side," Let Israel now say—**
- 2 "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,
When men rose up against us,**
- 3 Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their
wrath was kindled against us;**
- 4 Then the waters would have overwhelmed us, The
stream would have gone over our soul;**
- 5 Then the swollen waters Would have gone over our
soul."**
- 6 Blessed *be* the LORD, Who has not given us as prey to
their teeth.**
- 7 Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the
fowlers; The snare is broken, and we have escaped.**

8 Our help *is* in the name of the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

It's probably best to take the flood of water out of the serpent's mouth as a word picture of the hatred, lies, and wave of anti-semitic propaganda that will flow forth from his mouth to inflame the world against the Jews.

Sitting as he does in the seat of political and military power, he urges a quick military strike to wipe out fleeing Israel.

But by the time the attack is mobilized a full third of Israel is safely sequestered in their refuge.

The rest were late in getting started, not taking the words and warning of Jesus seriously until too late.

I say that because in Zech 13:8-9 we read this -

8 And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "*That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it:*

9 I will bring the *one-third* through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, '*This is My people*'; And each one will say, '*The LORD is my God.*'"

When the nations seek to dislodge the last third of Israel from their refuge, the Earth itself rises up in some way to swallow the attacking armies.

This could be an earthquake, a storm or some totally miraculous event.

As it says in Isaiah 59:19, "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him."

The point is, Satan knows it's fruitless to persist in his attack on the wilderness refuge of Israel, so he turns his wrath on the next best target.

17 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.

This verse makes it pretty clear that the remnant that makes it to the place of refuge is believing Israel, including the 144,000 of ch 7.

We can conclude that because the *rest of the believers* the devil persecutes are called her “*offspring*.”

They are the spiritual fruit of their ministry for the previous 3½ years.

It's this group that will make up the vast number of Tribulation saints we encountered in chs 6 & 7.

CONCLUSION

In v. 12 we saw that when the devil is cast out of heaven, he knows he has a short time.

Why then doesn't he just give up?

Don't forget that Satan is *utterly depraved*.

He is *insane*.

Every thing he has ever done, from the moment of his fall to this has been undone and turned around and made into the means of promoting the glory of God – everything!!!

Why doesn't he get a clue and give up?

Here's the problem with answering that question – we suppose there is some REASON – and there is none.

You see, a reason implies something reasonable – something logical, something with some basis in good sense.

And that's the problem with sin – all sin – there is no reason for it.

Sin is the very essence of unreason.

Sin is, to be blunt, stupid!

A better question that “Why doesn't Satan give up?” might be, “Why don't I give up?”

Our rebellion against God makes *even less sense* than Satan's rebellion does.

[1] Guzik, David, *Online Commentary*

[2] *ibid.*

[3] *ibid.*