

## War in Heaven • Revelation 12:7-12

### INTRO • Read vs.

9/11

1. I apologize to the men at the men's fellowship yesterday who already heard this.
2. On the evening of Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001, we all went to bed assuming the next day would be much like the previous. It wasn't.
3. That next morning, 19 terrorists boarded 4 large jet-liners & took off.
  - a. Once airborne, they commandeered the planes & re-directed them toward pre-arranged targets.
  - b. 2 flew to the WTC towers in NYC. 1 flew to the Pentagon.
  - c. The 4<sup>th</sup> was probably headed toward either the White House or Capital building.
  - d. But it was taken back by passengers who heard about what was happening in NY & decided they weren't going to let their plane become a weapon. They crashed it into a field in Penn.
4. It had been over 50 years since the US had been attacked like that.
  - a. Pearl harbor brought us into WWII.
  - b. And the 9/11 attacks ushered in what President Bush called "The War on Terror."
5. What Americans didn't realize was that the US had been at war **long before** 9/11.
  - a. Al Qaeda, had already declared war on the US.
  - b. In a speech made years earlier, Osama bin Laden dedicated the resources of Al Qaeda to attacking America both abroad and at home.
  - c. But our intelligence agencies never took the threat seriously.
6. 9/11 made it clear there was a determined, capable, & resourceful foe who hates & wants to destroy us.

### At War

1. While Al Qaeda & ISIS **remain** a real threat & our nation is **still** at war w/terrorits, we have an even closer & more dangerous enemy.
2. His name is Satan. He hates & wants to destroy us.
  - a. He's clever, capable, determined, & resourceful.
  - b. There's **never** going to be peace in that conflict until Jesus returns or we go to Him.
  - c. There's no peace-talks with the devil. No cease fire; no armistice.
3. We see that in our text today.

### Vs. 7-9

<sup>7</sup>And war broke out in heaven: 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 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.

1. It's the mid-point of the Tribulation and the beginning of what's called The GREAT Tribulation.
  - a. Earth now begins to be hammered by God's wrath.
  - b. And the devil ramps up his campaign of evil.
2. John's is shown why & how the devil is so angry. He's booted from heaven.
3. How are we to understand this? That is, **when** does this take place?
4. The popular idea of the devil is that he's in hell, running around poking people like Hitler & Stalin with a pitchfork.
5. No. Satan's not in hell and won't be till later.
6. Satan's domain is the Earth. The Bible calls him the god of this world & the prince of the power of the air.
  - a. And he has access to heaven. We see that in Job 1 where he appears before God to accuse Job.
  - b. He said he'd been walking around on the Earth & now stood before the Holy One to present a challenge.
  - c. Before Satan became the devil, Isa 14 & Eze 28 tell us **Lucifer** was the chief of the cherubim; those august creatures who surround God's throne.
  - d. Not content to **serve** God, Lucifer staged a coup; trying to take the throne for himself.
  - e. He failed. And though he lost his **position** as the chief cherub, he still has access to heaven.
7. We read here a time is coming when Satan will no longer have that access.
  - a. He'll get a big ole "ACCESS DENIED" when he swipes his ID to get in.

- b. He & his demons will be locked out.
- 8. John's just had a vision of all heaven's loud rejoicing because Jesus is about come & take possession of the Earth.
  - a. As God prepares to bring His Kingdom & rule to Earth, He first purges heaven.
  - b. Step One Boot satan out of heaven. // Step Two Evict him from Earth.
  - c. The noose tightens round the devil's neck.
- 9. Now: Note God's agent in **dealing** w/the devil.
- 10. It's the archangel Michael & some angelic companions; **Angel Team Six**.
- 11. Let's play a little game.
  - a. You old-time CCers; remember there's a lot of new folk here who've never done this.
  - b. The opposite of Up is? In? Black? Light? Good? God?
  - c. God **has NO** opposite. The devil is certainly **not** God's opposite.
    - 1) That's his desire; To be **like** the Most High.
    - 2) If he **were** God's opposite, he'd be like Him.
    - 3) But satan isn't & never will be like God because Satan is a **created being**.
  - d. The closest opposite to satan is Michael.
- 12. In Dan 12:1 we read this –
 

At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; & 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.

  - a. This is **exactly** what John sees here in Ch. 12.
  - b. At the mid-point of the Tribulation, the devil possesses the antichrist.
  - c. He enters the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and declares himself God.
  - d. When he demands the world worship him, the Jews, who've hoped he was their Messiah, realize he's an imposter and reject him.
  - e. In fury he attacks them, but God supernaturally delivers them by secreting them to a refuge He's prepared.
- 13. V. 9 makes it clear, the dragon John saw is none other than the devil, the serpent of old who seduced Eve to rebel against God.
  - a. Lest there's any doubt, John adds he's called, "the devil & satan."
    - 1) The word "devil" in Greek is *diabolos*.
    - 2) It means **slanderer, accuser**; one who defames.
    - 3) "Satan" means **adversary**.

Vs. 10-11

<sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, & strength, & the kingdom of our God, & the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day & night, has been cast down.

- 1. Heaven's pretty stoked the devil's been evicted. >> Rightly so! Cuz' the devil's a jerk!
- 2. We find out here what's he's been doing in heaven. Accusing us before God, just like he did Job.
- 3. He's mono-minded. His constant jaw is what losers you & I are.
- 4. He's that guy who's the constant critic; the voice forever complaining.
- 5. No wonder heaven's happy to see him go.
- 6. That word "**accuse**" was already ancient in John's time.
  - a. It's a compound meaning "**against the assembly**."
  - b. It was a political & legal term meaning to charge a citizen with **treason**.
  - c. If guilty, the person would be stripped of their citizenship & banished as a traitor.
- 7. Listen: That's what the devil does.
  - a. He rats us out to God.
  - b. He says we have no right to enjoy the blessings of salvation.
  - c. He labels you a traitor & suggests God disown & cast you off.
- 8. He does this, John says, day & night!
  - a. He's unrelenting. // He stands before God's throne saying
    - 1) "How can you love & bless them?"

- 2) “Look at them! They’re all a pack of useless dustballs.”
  - 3) “You’re worthy of their trust but they can’t even believe in You for daily bread.”
  - 4) “They constantly disobey. If they aren’t breaking one of Your laws in what they are DOING, they’re breaking one by what they’re NOT doing!”
  - 5) “They fail almost as much as they breath.”
  - 6) “You should wipe ‘em out.”
    - a) “Yeah, show Your holiness & wipe every last one of them off the face of the Earth.
    - b) That’ll teach ‘em!”
  - b. If that sounds far-fetched, read Job 1 to see how the devil accused Job.
9. Vs. 7-10 are John’s vision of when God finally says to the devil, “That’s enough of your attempts to turn me against **My** people. You want to see My holiness dealing with evil? How about this?”
- a. Then he turns to Michael & says – “Sic ‘em.”
  - b. And Michael, leading the hosts of heaven, goes to war against the devil & demons & ousts them from heaven altogether.
  - c. No longer does the devil accuse the Redeemed.
  - d. His charges are no longer heard in heaven’s halls.
10. But you know, God isn’t the only one the devil’s accused us to.
- a. He condemns US!
  - b. He heaps on the guilt, hoping to discourage us.
  - c. He wants to make us more aware of our failure than God’s forgiveness & grace.
  - d. The sun is massive, but by putting my thumb here, I can block it out.
  - e. God’s grace is an ocean to cover all our sin, but the devil tries to keep us from the shore.
11. In v. 11, John hears how the Redeemed deal with Satan’s accusations.
- <sup>11</sup> And they [the redeemed] overcame him by the blood of the Lamb & by the word of their testimony, & they did not love their lives to the death.
12. What John sees in vs. 7-10 is yet future for us.
- a. That means the devil ***is right now doing*** what v. 10 says; accusing us before God.
  - b. And while that’s what he’s doing, we have an Intercessor & Advocate who answers the charges the devil lays against us.
  - c. 1 John 2:1 says Jesus is our Advocate.
  - d. Heb 7:25 says Jesus intercession for us never stops.
  - e. So while the devil accuses us day & night, Jesus sits at the right hand of God & answers every charge.
13. Devil – Lance lied today at 7:05 PM. // Jesus – Father, I paid that one on Apr 30<sup>th</sup>, 32 AD at 3:07 PM.  
 Devil – Marty had an impure thought at 8:12 AM. // Jesus – Father, took care of that one at the Cross.  
 Devil – Monica gossiped at 12:23. Jesus – Pops, that’s covered by my blood shed once for all.
14. That’s what it means when it says we ***overcome the accuser by the blood of the Lamb.***
- a. His accusations carry no weight because Jesus paid the penalty our sins deserve.
  - b. In reality, our sins are *worse* than satan’s accusations make out.
  - c. The prophet Jeremiah says our hearts are wicked & deceitful.
  - d. Yet we are made righteous by the work of the cross. (Eph 1:7 & Col 1:14)
15. Imagine all this like a courtroom.
- a. Satan’s the prosecutor who lays out the charges against us.
  - b. Jesus is our defense attorney; His Father is the Judge; so the fix is in, right?
  - c. That fix is the Cross. It was decided on long before even the angels were created.
  - d. So the gavel falls and the case is dismissed. We’re declared innocent in Christ.
  - e. But there’s a problem. The devil’s accusations still ringing in ***our*** ears.
    - 1) We step down from the box in a daze & the devil sees we’re shaken.
    - 2) When we ought to rejoice & celebrate the good news --
    - 4) We’re instead struck by the immensity of our failure.
    - 5) So, satan sidles up & says, “Yes! You ***are*** a wretch! You ***always will be.***”
    - 6) “So, God will never be able to use you.”
    - 7) “Why even try to change. You know you’re just going to blow it.”

- 8) “You’re a loser! A sinner. And hey, what do sinners do? They sin! So go ahead.”
- f. If we listen to these lies & give in, he says, “See! You **really are** a wretch!”
  - g. The devil tempts us by making sin appealing.
    - 1) Then when we give in, he beats us over the head w/guilt.
    - 2) First he **entices**, then **accuses**.
  - h. Here’s what satan does. [Donut]
16. God has forgiven us in Christ. So the devil’s accusations carry no weight with God.
17. But all too often, *they do with us!*
18. Here’s how we overcome the accuser – *by the blood of Christ*.
- a. What did you do to earn forgiveness? Nothing!
  - b. It’s not what we do, but what Jesus DID that secures our salvation.
  - c. When the accuser reminds you of your failure. Don’t argue; agree!
  - d. In ourselves, we’re spiritual failures. // But it’s not about us; it’s about Jesus!
  - e. Think about it: Your failure **qualifies** you for what Jesus did!
19. What we need to do when the devil accuses us is confess the truth.  
They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony,
20. Our testimony is that we are saved **by the Grace of God, not by our works**.
21. And here’s the thing, **when God’s grace** gets ahold of our hearts, we realize the life He’s saved us for isn’t just a new & improved version of the old us; the old me.
22. It’s HIS LIFE **in** us.
23. This is where we come back to that beloved Gal. 2:20  
I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
24. And that drops us off at the last part of v. 11  
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.
25. There’s the evidence of a grace-gripped soul.  
Mere **survival** is no longer the most important thing.
26. Living **for God** is. And if living **for God** leads them to the time & place where they have to lay down their lives; then they will close them here and open them in glory.
27. Coming as this does in ch. 12, the ones most in view here are all those people who will come to faith during the Tribulation, and be put to death by the antichrist and his allies.
- a. But it includes the martyrs of every age.
  - b. And not just those who died at some executioner’s hand; but all those who gave up their own comfort & ease to serve God in the midst of difficulty and hardship.
  - c. Martyrdom comes in many forms.

## CONCLUSION

### Effective in the Fight

1. We are at war. And Satan’s strategy is to try to take you out of the fight.
2. If he can’t keep you from being saved, he’ll first tempt you to sin, then hammer you with guilt.
3. We overcome him, not by backing into a defensive position, but by **going on the offensive**.
4. The *Denver Post* reported on a new tactic sheep ranchers in Colorado used to combat coyotes.
  - a. Every year, hundreds of sheep are lost to the predators. They’d tried many ways to combat coyotes, but nothing worked.
  - b. Then Lexy Lowler imported some llamas.
  - c. She read that llamas are by nature not afraid of anything. They’re curious & when they see something of interest, they walk right up to it to check it out.
  - d. So she imported some and put them with her sheep.
  - e. Whenever a coyote approached, the llamas put their heads up & walked straight at it.
  - f. That’s aggressive behavior for coyote & they want nothing to do with it, so they take off.
5. James 4:7 says – “**Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you.”
6. When he reminds you of your **past**, remind him of his **future**.