

Revelation
Chapter 12:1-6
“Battle of the Ages”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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Teaching: As promised ... a memory check ...

- 1.** The Church Age (**chapters 2 & 3**)
- 2.** The Rapture of the Church from Earth to Heaven (**chapter 4**) [**CLICK**]
- 3.** The Bema Seat of Christ (**chapter 4**) [**CLICK**]
- 4.** The Seven Year Tribulation Period upon the Earth while the church is in Heaven (**chapters 5 through 19**) [**CLICK**]
- 5.** The Second Coming of Jesus with His church from Heaven to Earth (**chapter 19**)
- 6.** The Battle of Armageddon (**chapter 19**) [**CLICK**]
- 7.** The Thousand Year Reign of Peace or the Millennial Reign (**chapter 20**) [**CLICK**]
- 8.** Heavenly Eternity (**chapters 21 & 22**) [**CLICK**]

So ... in our scene here, John is in Heaven and is being given a glimpse of the future from that heavenly perspective. He’s been “Raptured” symbolically. He’s with the Lord and from that vantage point, witnessing the events of the Tribulation on earth.

That seven year season of time following the Rapture and preceding the Lord’s Second Coming. That season of time when the consequences of man’s sin are allowed to have their full effect without the restraint of the Holy Spirit and when the Lord’s wrath is directly hurled down upon the earth in the hope of pushing some to repentance and salvation.

We’ve already studied through ...

The Seven Seal Judgments: (Rev 6:1 - 8:6)

- 1.** The Antichrist revealed on the white horse.

2. War brought by the red horse.
3. Famine brought by the black horse.
4. Death to one fourth of the earth's population from the ashen horse.
5. Many are put to death for their faith and gather under the Alter of Sacrifice in Heaven to await the completion of the Judgment.
6. Terror is brought upon the earth through earthquakes, the sun turning black and moon turning red. Stars falling from the sky and men begging for the relief of death, but can't find it.

Between the Seal judgments and the Trumpet judgments there is the interlude in which the 144,000 Jews are supernaturally sealed to protect them (**Rev 7**).

7. Lightening, thunder and an earthquake which announce the 7 Trumpet judgments.

The Trumpet Judgments: (Rev 8:7 - 9:21)

1. A Third of the earth's trees and all of the grass are burned by falling hail and fire mixed with blood.
2. A third of the sea is turned to blood and a third of the sea life and ships are destroyed by a mountain of fire.
3. A third of the fresh water is made poisonous by a star called Wormwood.
4. A third of the sun, moon and stars are darkened.
5. Satan is given the key to unlock the Bottomless Pit and he releases hordes of demons which John says remind him of locusts only they have human faces with lion's teeth, horse bodies with long hair, crowns, battle armor and stinging scorpion tails. And they permitted to inflict pain upon all the earth's inhabitants except those 144,000 sealed Jewish witnesses for five months. And they are allowed to torment mankind, but are forbidden to kill anyone.
6. Four powerful demons lead an army of 200,000 to kill one third of the remaining population on earth by fire, smoke and brimstone.

Between the Sixth and Seventh Trumpet Judgments the Lord ordains another break ... this one being used for the revelation of Moses and Elijah as His two witnesses to the Jewish nation (**11:1-14**).

7. The unleashing of the Seven Bowl Judgments.

So in a nutshell: up to this point in the Tribulation, the Holy Spirit has ceased in His role as the pipeline of God's grace and His hands of protection and as a result ... the consequences of man's sin are coming to bear.

The Antichrist has been revealed, great death and destruction have come upon the earth, the 144,000 Jewish witnesses have been sealed and sent out, the two witnesses to the Jewish nation have come on the scene, fulfilled their task, been killed, resurrected and raptured, the Temple has been rebuilt and worship and sacrifices within it have been restored.

We are now at the halfway point of the Tribulation, the Antichrist who brokered the peace treaty that brought about the rebuilding of the Temple ... waltzes into that Temple and assumes the throne of God and declares himself to be the god of this universe – demanding to be worshipped.

He defiles the Temple in an act that Jesus refers to in **Matthew 24** as the Abomination of Desolation.

So as we approach **chapter 12**, the Seventh Trumpet of Judgment has blown, but the First Bowl of Judgment has not yet been poured out ... in fact, that doesn't happen until **chapter 16**. But this is not another interlude ... this is simply an extended explanation from John as he seeks to take in the scene and communicate it to us.

Now this morning we're going to be introduced to three characters on the pages of scripture here ... three characters that are all well known to us ... although not by the names that are used for them here, but by the description of their character.

They've been given nicknames that reflect who they are ... three of them this morning and three more between here and the **end of chapter 14**. I don't think that you'll have much difficulty identifying them.

The six characters in total are:

- The Woman
- The Dragon
- The Male Child
- The Beast that comes from the Sea
- The Beast that comes from the Land
- The Believing Remnant

Now we're going to begin our study this morning in the **3rd chapter of the book of Genesis** as the Lord pronounces Judgment upon Satan for his deception of Adam and Eve. The deception that led to sin and the sin that led to the fall of mankind. Here's what

God said ...

Gen 3:14 The LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.’

I don't know if you've ever had a bruised heel, but let me tell you ... they hurt. And it seems like you can't do anything without being affected by it. Even sitting with your feet resting seems to hurt. But, painful though it may be ... no one has ever died from a bruised heel.

Q. But what about a good knock on the noggin? – Ya, that one can do you in.

This is the battle of the ages. Set into motion in the Garden of Eden ... not the slightest bit diminished in the day in which we live ... but ultimately completed in the account of **Revelation**.

Many times I have reminded you that this earth is not a playground ... it's a battleground. And that's more than a mere cliché ... it's a literally true statement.

As Christians, we generally have no trouble believing in Satan because we see his handiwork all around us.

Almost from the beginning of time, God and Satan have been at war and this earth has been the bloodiest battleground of that war.

Well, let's get into the scriptures ...

Verses 1-2:

Now the word “great” is used several times in this passage ... it's used to describe the sign of this woman as well as the next sign that John sees ... a great dragon. In the Greek it's megas (meg'-as). And for the sake of us envisioning what John saw ... it helps to know that the word doesn't simply mean “great” in the sense of being grand or important, but of literally being large. So these signs are physically large or dominating.

But do note with me that the sign of the woman is great ... physically large and dominating, while in **verse 3**, it's not the sign that's great, but the dragon himself. Keep that in mind as we consider together what these signs mean.

Now, as always, whenever possible you want to use the scriptures to interpret the scriptures. Not the mind or the imagination of man, but the scriptures.

For instance ... you may have heard it said that this woman is symbolic of the church ... that she is the mother church, but that notion comes with two major points of scriptural opposition:

- 1.** One ... she's pregnant! The church is supposed to be the bride of Christ ... the chaste virgin the scriptures say. Oops!
- 2.** When this woman gives birth ... she births the Son of God.

Q. So which is it ... did the church birth Christ or did Christ birth the church?

Alternately, you may have heard it taught that this woman is the Virgin Mary ... an even more common teaching and an interpretation officially held by the Roman Catholic Church. They hold that she has ascended to Heaven and is pictured here crowned with glory.

Q. But again ... we are to use the scriptures to interpret the scriptures ... so where's the interpretation of this passage found then? – For starters ... in **Genesis 37**.

Q. I'm referring to the story of Jacob ... also known as? – Israel! The story of Israel and his wife Rachael and his son Joseph as well as the other 11 sons.

In particular, here in **Genesis 37**, I'm referring to the second of two dreams that Joseph had and that he rather foolishly related to his brothers and his father.

Q. Do you remember? – In the second dream that Joseph had, he saw 12 stars and the sun and the moon.

Q. Sound familiar? – Same as the image John just described for us.

And in this dream ... the sun and the moon and the 11 other stars all bowed down to Joseph's star ... as if he had a crown of authority. And it was Jacob (or Israel) himself who, rather angrily, interprets that dream.

So I think clearly this woman is the nation of Israel. Further evidence of that is seen in the fact that in John's vision -- this woman is in pain ... she's in travail. And then remember that **Jeremiah (30:7)**, refers to this Tribulation Season as The Time of Jacob's Trouble ... the time of Israel's Trouble.

Q. Why? – Because during the Tribulation ... the Jewish nation will have the primary job of evangelizing the left-behind world. And in that effort ... they will have far more than their fair share of trouble.

But from eternity past they were chosen by God for that mission. And just like us ... anytime you're chosen by God for a task ... you will be opposed by God's enemy as you

seek to complete it.

If God is using you ... you will be hassled and harassed by the one who now exists to see to it that you fail to fulfill God's purposes.

If you have any doubt of that ... just look at the Jewish nation. The harassment of them has never ceased.

But, the other thing that is a mark of God's calling and use of a person or a group or, in the case of Israel ... a nation, is the evidence of God's blessing. So not just the opposition, but also the successes in spite of it.

Consider this; the Jewish nation makes about 0.1% of the world's population ... about 1/10th of 1 percent. But ... as of today ... 28% of all Nobel Prizes ever awarded have gone to the Jews. Eighteen times more than any other nation.

Collectively, they hold 31% of all awards ever given in music, science and literature.

They are a persecuted, but exceedingly blessed people ... all because God has called them and used them and will use them in the future and Satan knows it.

Q. Now I know that it is mere human nature for us to say ... why the Jews? Why that little nation? – Well again ... the scriptures give us the answer, but the answer has a much broader application than just the Jews and God's choice of them.

It actually extends to the question of why God chose you and why He chose me.

Q. Why would we be afforded a home in Heaven when we are so unworthy? – So what's the answer to God's choices ... Jews or me or you? – We find it in **Deuteronomy chapter 7** where, speaking to the Jewish nation He says ...

Deut 7:7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you ...

The Lord loves you ... because He loves you! Not because you're worthy, not because you have something to offer Him or because you're beautiful. The Lord loves you simply because He loves you! And how liberating that fact is!

Note also that this woman in John's vision is not just a woman ... she's a mother. In fact she's in labor with the male child that will be introduced just a few verses ahead.

But now ... John gets a second vision ...

Verses 3-4:

Q. Doesn't that sound just like Satan? – Typical of him ... this is what he does best and does often ... he waits for a moment of vulnerability and then pounces. That's what he does to me and that's what he does to you. Here he is waiting for the newborn babe ... wet from the womb and helpless. That's just soooo Satan.

Q. But how do we know for sure that this Dragon is a picture of Satan? – No guess work here ... just skip down to **verse 9** and read ...

Rev 12:9 And the great dragon [is] ... the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.

Satan is very clever at disguises, but in this vision we see him wearing his true colors ... the image of a dragon.

With seven heads. Seven, as you know, is the Biblical number of completeness. Perhaps speaking of Satan's complete intelligence in an earthly sense. He really does have complete intelligence of man and his fallen nature. He does not however, have complete knowledge of the future as God does. But we would have to have a new scale if we were going to measure his IQ. He has a very comprehensive understanding of how to get things done on this earth.

In fact, God says of him in ...

Ezek 28:3 Behold, you are wiser than Daniel; There is no secret that is a match for you.

And He goes on in that same passage to speak of his **great wisdom and understanding.**

It also says that he has ten horns. Horns, of course, are Biblically symbolic of power. And indeed Satan has great power. And I think it's noteworthy that his power is greater in number than his intelligence. Even more brawn than brain.

And he's also described as having seven diadems or crowns ... one for each head. Those, of course, speak to us of Satan's authority ... his dominion over the kingdoms of this world.

So he has great intelligence ... even greater power and also great authority!

And so within these two signs we see the battle of the ages ... Satan against the Nation Israel and the male child who came forth from her ... Jesus Christ. Satan is poised and ready ... watching carefully for an opportunity to destroy this child.

And we see that the reason he is troubling this woman is because of her child. It is the child that is the real target. Everything else is mere collateral damage.

Again ... Satan is smart ... very smart. If he could destroy the Messiah then that single

act would condemn, not just the woman (symbolizing the nation Israel), but all other peoples and nations with her.

Q. How better to crush God's heart than to send His beloved creation to eternal Hell?

And since Israel was responsible for, not only the physical birth of the Messiah, but also His crucifixion, we can understand why Satan would seek to interfere with that.

And since God has future purposes for the Jews ... in fact things that they must prophetically fulfill before the Messiah can return to earth ... Satan is still seeking to destroy the Jews.

Q. How many men ... how many nations throughout history have had their hearts deceived by Satan so as to seek the destruction of Israel?

- 1.** Pharaoh tried it when he ordered the midwives in Egypt to kill all the male, Hebrew children, but God preserved them.
- 2.** And throughout the Old Testament as Satan moved upon nation after nation ... in **2 Kings chapter 11** it comes down to one man.

2 Kings 11:1 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring. **2** But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So they hid him from Athaliah, and he was not put to death. **3** So he was hidden with her in the house of the LORD six years, while Athaliah was reigning over the land.

Satan was only one man away from destroying the seed of the woman that we read of in **Genesis 3** ... the line of the Messiah, but ... God preserved.

- 3.** Later on it was the Babylonians and then the Assyrians ... each of them being moved by Satan to exterminate the line of that seed. He knows his head crushing is coming, but God has preserved.
- 4.** The Romans tried, Herod the Great tried, the Islamic world has tried, Hitler tried and Satan inspired anti-Semitism is alive and well today, but God will preserve as He always has.

I think Mark Twain captured the history of the Jewish nation as well as any writer ever has when he said;

“The Jew ... he could be vain of himself and not be ashamed of it. Yes, he could

even be excused of it, because the Egyptian and the Babylonian and the Persian arose and they filled the planet with sound and with splendor ... then faded off to dream stuff and then passed away. The Greek and the Roman followed and made a fast noise, but they are gone. Other people have sprung up and held the torch high for a time, but it burned out and they sit in the twilight or it has vanished. But the Jew saw them all and is now what he always was. Exhibiting no decadence; no infirmity of age; no weakening of his energy; no dulling of his alert, aggressive mind. All things are mortal, but the Jew. Other courses pass away, but he remains. And what is the secret of his immortality?"

Now the other thing that this passage declares to us is that when Satan rebelled against God as described in **Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel chapter 28**, he was sentenced to earth and the text says that he swept with him 1/3 of all the angles of God. Those angels becoming the demons that serve Satan today.

And based upon this, many have concluded that in God's original design there were three Ark Angels (Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer) and that each Ark Angel was responsible for 1/3rd of the angels.

Q. So how many angels are we talking about? –

Can't say for sure, but Jesus does give us a minimum number in **Matthew 26:53** where He declares that during His earthly ministry ... 72,000 angels had been placed at His disposal.

So if we were to assume that as the total number of angels (which it is probably not) ... that means that there would be 24,000 demons, led by this fallen Ark Angel, Lucifer roaming this earth today.

And each angel, we are told in **2 Kings 19:35**, has enough power to overcome 185,000 human beings even unto death. A formidable army for sure.

The age-old battle between good and evil; God reaching out to mankind and Satan seeking to cut off our access to God's saving hand.

Verse 5: As the church is called the Bride of Christ, the nation Israel is persistently referred to in the Old Testament as God's wife. Not the chaste virgin who will be presented to Christ on the day of the Rapture, but the unfaithful wife, even being referred to as The Whore as she constantly went after the false gods of other nations.

And here we see more of that picture as the Son of God is birthed ... brought into this world through the Father's wife ... the nation of Israel in the person of Mary.

Shortly after the birth of Christ a righteous man by the name of Simeon came to the Temple to give the Lord honor and he held the baby in the air and said to His parents ...

Luke 2:34 ... this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed —

During the coming Millennial Reign, Jesus will rule with a rod of iron – righteousness will be imposed and evil will be fully contained, but for now ... the Lord sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven ... awaiting the Father's command to remove His church and begin the procession toward that day of His rule.

Verse 6: The Lord is birthed and ascends to Heaven and then this woman ... speaking of the nation Israel flees to the desert where God cares for her for 3 and ½ years.

Q. So what is this place where God will hide and care for the Jews? – We get a strong clue in **Isaiah 16**, where prophetic instruction is given to the nation of Moab which is modern day country of ...

Q. Who knows? – Jordan.

Isa 16:3 "... Cast your shadow like night at high noon; Hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive. 4 "Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you; Be a hiding place to them from the destroyer."

The Jews once came to Jesus and ask Him for the signs of His coming and He gives them the answer beginning in **Matthew 25, verse 15** by reminding them of the event that **Daniel** prophesied of called the Abomination of Desolation (**11:31 & 12:11**).

And He warned them, as a nation, that when that event happens, that they should flee to the desert. In fact He says "Don't even go back to get your coat ... just run!"

Q. So, where is this hiding place? – Don't know, but if I had to guess, I would put my money on the Rock City of Petra in the mountain deserts of Jordan.

Again in Isaiah, the Lord is speaking of Modern day Jordan where Petra is when He says ...

Isa 26:20 Come, my people, enter into your rooms And close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while Until indignation runs its course.

But even so ... it is clear that their protection is not dependent upon some natural fortification or any weapons of war, but upon the Lord.

Conclusion:

When Satan rebelled against God so long ago ... he was trying to destroy the perfect community of Heaven, but he failed in that ... God casting him out of Heaven with 1/3rd of the angels who were partakers in his rebellion.

And in the Garden of Eden, Satan tried to destroy man's relationship with God as well as the earth that man dwells upon, but again he failed because of God's plan of redemption.

And Satan has not given up yet!

Israel is a nation of 4 million people surrounded by 100 million Satanic and deceived, sworn enemies who persist to this day in trying to exterminate that little group of people.

Anytime God loves something ... Satan will hate it. Any time God uses something ... Satan will oppose it. But just like the nation of Israel ... our God delights in protecting those He loves and uses.

There will certainly be difficult times, but based upon the centuries of historical faithfulness ... we need not fear. The flight might be rough at times, but an absolutely perfect landing is divinely guaranteed.

We read this of the time the Jews were enslaved in Egypt ...

Deut 7:8 ...the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery ...

And within that we again see God's power and love and faithfulness, but realize this ... that while it is true that God has a national covenant with the Jew ... He has a personal and individual covenant with you and with me as He does with every born again man, woman and child.