

Revelation 12:7-17 | War In Heaven

Introduction

John continues his cosmic view of Satan's conflict against God and His people. Having been unable to destroy the Redeemer (Christ) born of the woman (Israel as God's Messianic bride through whom comes the Redeemer), Satan now turns his attention to God's people. This is representative of how Satan has worked against God's people throughout the whole of redemptive history.

Verse-By-Verse Notes

Verses 7-9

- Daniel Akin: "The time is not specified. Some believe it looks back to the time of Satan's original, primordial fall. Others believe it looks to the time of the crucifixion and his climactic defeat. Still others believe it looks to the future and possibly the midpoint of the great tribulation. Dogmatism is unwarranted. What is certain are the results of the cosmic conflict."¹
- Given the varying views (see above comment), it seems likely that this is a reference to a future expulsion of Satan from the heavenly realm because Satan will no longer have access to God in order to accuse His people (see verse 10).

Verses 10 & 11

- Though no longer a member of the heavenly host, Satan has access to heaven as the accuser of the brethren. This ties in to the idea of the "council of the gods" (see Job 1:6; 2:1; and Psalm 82).
- Satan's name means *accuser*; *adversary*.
- One of the reasons some interpreters believe this expulsion of Satan from the heavenly realm occurred at the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ is that because Christ dealt once for all with the sins of His people in His death, Satan has no more grounds to accuse them because the blood of Christ covers their sin (see Romans 8:1; 33-34).
- The perseverance of believers even to the point of death is accomplished through the truth of the atoning death of Jesus. Those who know their sins are covered have no reason to fear death.

Verse 12

- Heaven rejoices at the expulsion of Satan, but the Earth will feel Satan's terrible wrath because he knows that his time is short. The "time" here should be considered

¹ Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David Platt, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 213.

generally, and not a specific season, though Scripture tells us that the last days will be a season of increasing deception (Matthew 24:24; 1 Timothy 4:1ff; 2 Timothy 3:1ff, etc.)

Verse 13

- Unable to thwart God's redemptive plan by destroying the Redeemer (Christ), Satan turns his attention to the woman (faithful remnant Israel and her offspring – all those who trust in Christ).

Verses 14-17

- Satan's attack on faithful remnant Israel and her offspring (again, all those who trust in Christ) is thwarted by the providential protection of God.
- Tom Schreiner: "The serpent tries to flood and overwhelm the woman, the people of God. Again the language is symbolic: the serpent uses persecution, deceit, false teachers, and moral depravity to overwhelm and engulf the church (cf. Pss. 18:4; 144:7–8, 11). The earth, however, opens up to swallow the flood emanating from the mouth of the dragon (cf. Num. 16:30, 32; Deut. 11:6). In other words, God provides means of escape for the church—just as he did when Israel was rescued from Egypt and the waters of the Red Sea—so that the church will not be destroyed by the serpent. The church may be rocked by false teaching and moral compromise, but it finally and ultimately stands erect and steadfast. The Devil cannot and will not win."²
- The phrase "he stood on the sand of the sea" may be a reference to Satan's position of influence in the world's sphere, which will yield the "beast" of Revelation 13 (see Revelation 13:1).

BIG IDEA: SATAN HATES THE PEOPLE OF GOD FURIOUSLY, BUT WILL ULTIMATELY FAIL TO HARM THEM.

² Thomas R. Schreiner, "Revelation," in *Hebrews–Revelation*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. XII, *ESV Expository Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 665.