

Lesson 16
Revelation 12
The Conflict of All Ages

Memory verse: “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3: 29 NIV).

In chapter 11, the seventh and last trumpet of judgment from God has been blown. But the details that describe what that blowing causes don't begin until chapter 15 and they run through chapter 18. Before a discussion of the effect of the blowing of the seventh trumpet, this is this discussion in chapters 12, 13 and 14. And this section takes us all the way to creation, if you will, all the way back into eternity and the fall of Lucifer. And then it brings us all the way forward into the time of the Great Tribulation so that we view the Tribulation not only from God's perspective as we have in chapters 6 through 11, but now from Satan's perspective in chapters 12 through 14.

We see Satan's side and Satan's activities. We've already learned about God's perspective and God's side and God's judgment in the seven seals and the seven trumpets. And now we're taken back through the same period of time, in fact even beyond that, way back to creation and way back to the fall of Lucifer. And then ultimately we'll come right back to the time of the Tribulation. In fact, we find ourselves already there in verse 6. And we'll be taken back through that seven-year period to view the very same period of time from Satan's vantage point. We already know the role of God. We already know the enterprise of God. We already know the activity of God in the judgments and the work of salvation described on behalf of Gentiles and Israel. And now we're going to learn about the role and the enterprise and the activities of Satan as he operates in the same period of time. And this is why Jesus described it in Matthew 24 as a time like no other time in the history of the world, because not only is God going to be pouring out the maximum amount of fury, but Satan is going to be pouring out the maximum amount of fury as well. God pouring it out on the ungodly, Satan pouring it out on the godly.

So, it is going to be the coming together of all the worst possible and imaginable events...both from God's side and Satan's. And by the time we come back through chapter 12, 13 and 14 and hit 15, where we pick up the seventh trumpet, we will have a full picture of what has gone on in the time of the Tribulation leading up to the blowing of the seventh trumpet.

Now in order to give us a full understanding of why things are happening the way they are in the time of the Tribulation, the Holy Spirit designs to take John and therefore us all the way back to creation and even before creation, which we read about in those first three verses.

Satan is the great enemy of the church, and he fights against God and His people by accusing the saints in heaven and attacking them on earth. However, Christ has overcome the old serpent, and He gives victory to His people.

The adversary always works through human means, in this case, “the beast” (false Christ or Antichrist) and the false prophet. Satan is an imitator, a counterfeiter, and he seeks to control men by means of deception. “The beast” is the future world dictator who promises to solve the pressing problems of the nations; the false prophet is his “propaganda minister.” For a time, it appears that the satanic trio is succeeding, but then their world empire begins to collapse, the nations assemble for one final battle, Jesus Christ appears, and the battle is over.

Has this not been the pattern for the church’s conflict with evil over the centuries? Whether the ruler has been a Caesar, a Hitler, a Stalin, or an agnostic humanist, Satan has energized and motivated him. The ruler has promised the people all that they want and need, only to lead them into slavery. He has usually had an associate to promote his program to the people and to entice them, if not force them, to obey. Often their submission amounted almost to worship.

God has permitted His people to suffer under the despotism of these rulers, but He has also enabled His people to experience great victories, even in martyrdom. They have been true over-comers! Then He has brought deliverance, only to have the cycle repeat itself, with each succeeding dictatorship worse than the previous one. The climax will come with the appearance of the Antichrist in his time (2 Thess. 2).

Things to learn: 1) Israel and the Messiah 2) the conflict in heaven 3) victory over Satan

Discussion questions:

1) What do we know about the woman and the child as seen in the vision by John in Revelation chapter 12?

Q2. Is Satan the dragon and what is the passage telling us about the conflict in heaven?

Q3. How can believers have victory over Satan (look at verse 11)?