

THE DEVIL'S FRENZIED HATRED

PART 3 – REVELATION 12

The narrative of Satan's rebellion is structurally segmented in this chapter. This helps us to better see the sequenced periods of his terrible challenges to God. At the end the "woman" – God's purified church and her seed – become the focus of his harm. Thus far, we have seen in this missive:

A heinous red dragon noted as a competing **sign** with the "woman." Then its history of deceiving one third of the angelic host (vs 4), leading to:

- War in heaven (vs 7)
- The dragon being defeated (vs 8)
- Then he was cast out of heaven (vs 9)
- Next in the narrative he sought to kill the Christ child (vs 4) – whom the dragon had previously fought (Michael) (vs 7)

The eviction from heaven brought a negative transition to Lucifer's life. In retaliation towards God, he committed his powerful nature toward deception and harm against humanity. This chapter will finally fast forward to the time of Satan's **last opportunity** to exercise his fiendish hatred. This period is a significant focus of this apocalyptic book and of major interest to us today!

"Satan had been Lucifer, the light-bearer, the sharer of God's glory in heaven, and second to Jesus in power and majesty. In the words of inspiration he is described as the one who 'sealest up the sun, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.' But Lucifer had perverted the beauty and power with which he was endowed by the Creator, and his light had become darkness. When through his rebellion he was cast out of heaven, he determined to make man his victim, and the earth his kingdom. He cast the blame of his rebellion upon Christ, and in determined hatred of God, sought to wound Him through the fall of man. In the happiness and peace of Eden, he beheld a vision of the bliss that he had forever lost, and he determined to excite in the hearts of God's creatures the same bitterness that he himself felt, so that their songs of praise and thanksgiving might be turned to reproach against their Maker."¹

John now picks up the time when the "kingdom of this world" was wrested from Satan.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:10).

Here, another change in Satan's hate-filled saga is described. This is the onset of a celestial hymn, originating in the courts above. Its lyrics help draw us into the prophetic experience that John has. What Michael did to Lucifer in heaven is a metaphor for what He will later do to the devil on earth. Christ's authority remained supreme in those heavenly courts, and that same authority will soon conquer and become supreme on earth.

¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Bible Echo*, November 1, 1892.

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven,” (vs 10)

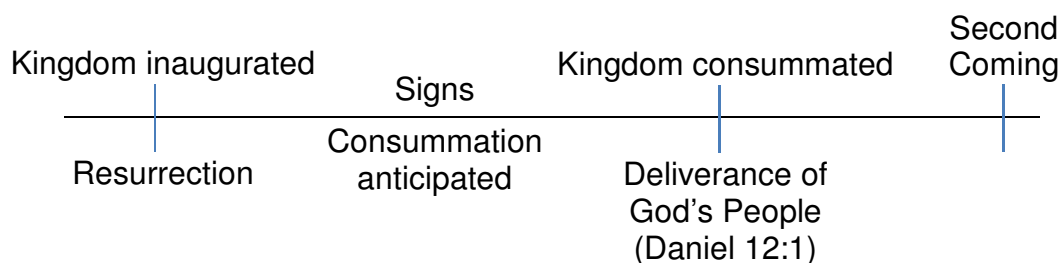
Loud voices coming from heaven represent messages that **all** are to hear (e.g., 7:2-3; 8:13; 11:12; 14:7, 9, 18; 21:3). John, in first person, reveals that he heard the following universal cry:

“Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ:” (vs 10)

This announces the **onset** of the kingdom of God – its **inauguration** – which began right after His resurrection. In anticipation of this “*Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God*” (Mark 1:14). The word “*Now*” emphasizes the timing of its onset.

In the previous chapter there were also great voices from heaven, which cried: “*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever*” (Revelation 11:15b). There, the kingdom is **consummated** (cf. 19:1).

Jesus alluded to this latter time when drawing our attention to the events in His apocalyptic discourse: “*So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand*” (Luke 21:31) (when it is consummated).



The picture of “*now is come salvation*” (cf. 7:10, 12:10, 19:1) focuses on the victory of the Cross.

“It was Christ’s death on the cross that struck Satan’s death knell.”²

“This is the crisis of the world. If I become the propitiation for the sins of men, the world will be lighted up. The defaced image of God will be reproduced and restored, and a family of believing saints will finally inhabit the heavenly home. This is the result of the crucifixion of Christ. ‘As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.’”³

The “strength,” “kingdom” and “power of Christ” reveal the inaugurated authority of Christ. The sovereign rule of Christ has commenced.⁴

“As his prophetic eye saw the results of his sacrifice, Christ exclaimed, ‘Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ In the

² White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, November 13, 1900.

³ White, Ellen G.; *The Signs of the Times*, July 8, 1897.

⁴ Mounce, Robert H.; *The Book of Revelation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977), p. 238.

place where Satan has his seat, there will I set my cross. I will stand at the head of humanity. Through my merits man shall stand on vantage ground. I will be the great center to draw all men to God. As under the rule of Satan evil influences have conspired for the ruin of man, so under my rule the influence of my servants shall form a power to restore. The legions of hell will combine with the prince of darkness to oppose the laws of the kingdom of Christ; but to every man I will give his work, and with his work I will give power to win souls to God. Every human being who will receive and believe in me I will use in winning back the world to God.”⁵

There are three descriptive “woes” that Satan experiences in John’s writings:

1. **“cast out”** of heaven to earth (12:7-9). *“And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven”* (Luke 10:18).

“Evil spirits, in the beginning created sinless, were equal in nature, power, and glory with the holy beings that are now God’s messengers. But fallen through sin, they are leagued together for the dishonor of God and the destruction of men. United with Satan in his rebellion, and with him cast out from heaven, they have, through all succeeding ages, co-operated with him in his warfare against the divine authority. We are told in Scripture of their confederacy and government, of their various orders, of their intelligence and subtlety, and of their malicious designs against the peace and happiness of men.”⁶

2. **“cast out”** – this is the initial imagery portrayed here, felt to be at the time of the Cross. *“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out”* (John 12:31).

This reflects Satan’s loss at being the prince of this world.

“Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ’s brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.”⁷

3. **“cast down”** embellishes the second “cast out.”

“for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (vs 10)

“The casting down of Satan as an accuser of the brethren in Heaven was accomplished by the great work of Christ in giving up his life.”⁸

⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, June 5, 1900.

⁶ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 513.

⁷ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

⁸ White, Ellen G.; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 194.

“The victory gained at His death on Calvary broke forever the accusing power of Satan over the universe, and silenced his charges that self-denial was impossible with God and therefore not essential in the human family (MS 50, 1900).”⁹

“Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ’s brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.”¹⁰

This role of “accuser” was alluded to in the story of Job.

“The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous.”¹¹

This celestial hymn of rejoicing declares a significant limitation that came on Satan to accuse God’s people before the heavenly universe. Heaven is relieved. The satanic visitor can no longer taint its portals. His kingdom is confined. Satan can no longer be an accuser of our brothers and sisters.¹²

“which accused them before our God day and night” (vs 10)

This is a legal expression, suggesting a courtroom where Satan was the prosecuting attorney (Job 1:6-12, 2:1-6, Zechariah 3:1-1). His accusations were metaphorically depicted as a war against God’s church. The “beast” (Satan’s representative) temporarily “conquered” – gaining the upper hand (11:7, 13:7). Then in 17:14 the “kings of the earth” even “go to war” against the Lamb and His followers. But the beast leaders of the world and Satan’s followers are finally conquered and subdued (11:9, 12:10, 7:14).

This parallels the promises to the “overcomers” in the letters to the churches (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).¹³ They conquered by “the blood of the Lamb” (17:14), elevating the victory of Christ at the Cross!

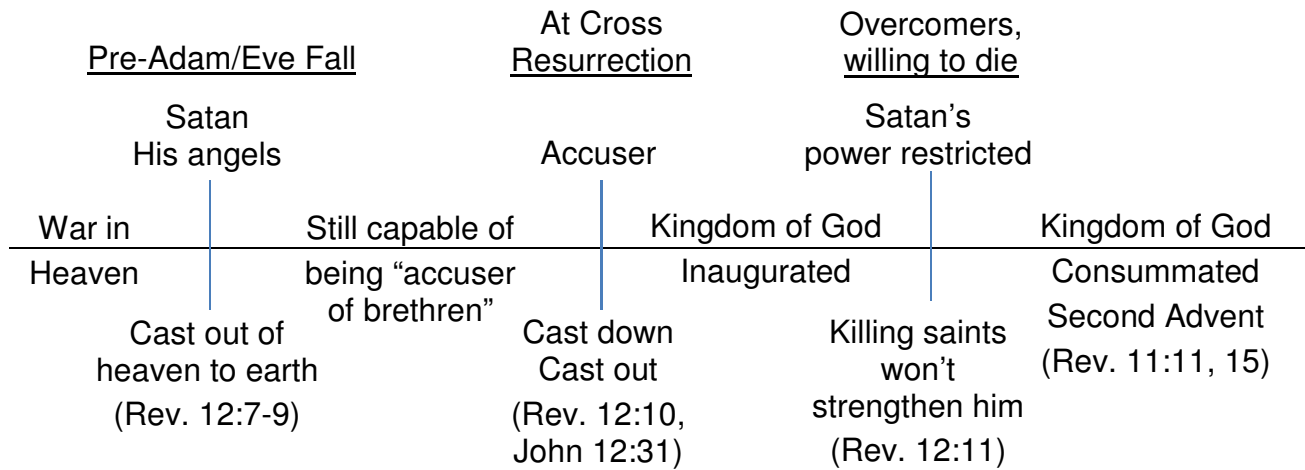
⁹ White, Ellen G.; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.

¹⁰ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

¹¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 518.

¹² Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 474.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 475.



“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11).

The purpose of this chapter, indeed the whole book, is to reveal the ultimate victory of Christians over Satan through the Cross of Christ. God’s people can be assured that satanic influences are “a defeated power, however contrary it might seem to human experience.”¹⁴

The dragon may be able to hurt the body, but he cannot harm the soul. “The suffering of Christians is a sign, not of Satan’s victory, but of the saints’ victory over Satan because of their belief in the triumph of the cross, with which their suffering identifies them.”¹⁵

It may appear that he has obtained temporal power over their lives (11:7, 13:7), but the eternal reward will be in favor of the saints. “In 15:2 God’s victors stand before the throne with harps and sing the songs of Moses, a song of deliverance and victory.”¹⁶

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb” (vs 11)

The aorist *enikesan* “they overcame” is proleptic as is the narrative of 7:9, related to the great multitude. As in the overcomers noted within the seven churches, the message is anticipated perfection – total victory over Satan! Peace at last.

This victory is possible because of the “blood of the Lamb.” The theological key reveals “they” – the saints – activating that blood in their lives.

What does this victory bring? The saints are legally permitted to use that blood as justification for acquittal in the heavenly courtroom. God then clears them of guilt. They are judged as overcomers. They are “made white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14). They will not be harmed by the second death (2:11, 20:6).

¹⁴ Ladd, *Revelation*, p. 171, as quoted in Beale, p. 663.

¹⁵ Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan – 1999), p. 633.

¹⁶ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 475.

“Christ was wrongfully accused and executed by Satan’s earthly pawns. But his resurrection vindicated him in the law court of heaven and enabled him to take away the devil’s right and power as heavenly prosecutor (cf. 1:18): ‘I was dead, and, behold, I am living ... and [consequently] I have the keys of death and Hades.’”¹⁷ Christ’s role as advocate (“defense attorney”) is affirmed (I John 2:1, Hebrews 7:25).

“and by the word of their testimony;” (vs 11)

Because of Christ’s sacrifice unto death, God’s people have a great spiritual motivation to devote themselves to His service.¹⁸ Looking deeper at this “witness and testimony” imagery in the whole book aids in penetrating this phrase.

Jesus had a testimony (1:2, 9)

Because of this testimony He is called the “faithful and true Witness” (3:14; cf. 1:5, John 18:37)

Jesus’ testimony is also called the “spirit of prophecy” (19:10). Contextually, the whole book of Revelation.

“Overcomers” had a testimony (12:10-11)

The believers are also called a “faithful witness” (19:10)

Their witness led John to even note that many were Martyrs for that testimony (6:9, 12:11, 12:17, 20:4).¹⁹

John also suffered because of the testimony of Jesus (1:9).

Jesus’ testimony was His witness of God’s apocalyptic revelation. The saints’ testimony (*marturia*) is an evangelistic confession of Jesus and that Word.²⁰ It is contextually a witness to these end-time prophecies in Revelation!

“and they loved not their lives unto the death” (vs 11)

This phrase underscores the ultimate loyalty of God’s last-day church – labeled more specifically as the “remnant” of the woman’s seed (12:17). Jesus identified the need for this level of commitment (Luke 14:26; cf. Mark 8:34-35). This, in turn, links the believers to the fifth seal, when martyrs join the ranks of those who gave their “all” for Christ (6:9).

This echoes the mandate given to the Smyrna church: “*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*” (Revelation 2:10). (“Ten” refers to the “time allotted,” the “complete period” that God has set aside.)

¹⁷ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 664.

¹⁸ Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago), 1992, p. 135.

¹⁹ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

²⁰ Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.

Clearly, this narrative is another picture of Satan's defeat. The blood of the Lamb was the redemptive act that assured them of the ultimate hope of resisting Satan. Then, "Their willingness to proclaim the message overcame even their natural fear of death."²¹

These overcomers refer, in reality, to individuals in all the seven churches.²²

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12).

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." (vs 12)

In verse 10 John heard a voice from heaven, shouting for everyone to hear. "Now is come salvation." Then the message in verse 11 announced that there were overcomers of the devil, through the blood of the Lamb. Now the very heavens, its dwellers (the angels) and those saints already redeemed are invited to rejoice because of this victory.

This recalls the words "*Shout for joy, O heavens*" (Isaiah 49:13) and "*Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad*" (Psalm 96:11), echoing what God had done for His people. Though it is a point of great praise that Satan has been restricted ("cast out," "cast down" – vss 9-10), the victory of the saints is now here in view. In future imagery they successfully resisted Satan, in spite of his accusations and attacks.

These "heaven dwellers" will be contrasted with the "earth dwellers" in the next chapter (13:8, 12), who represent the wicked who worship the beast and the dragon (Satan).

The "earth" imagery changes now as God warns of a terrible "woe."

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea!" (vs 12)

Though the earth and sea represent the realm of evil, as depicted in the next chapter where a beast ascends out of the sea and one out of the earth,²³ the wording here is couched as a warning to earth's inhabitants. "Woe" (*ouai* – G) suggests mourning or lament (8:13; 9:12; 11:14; 18:10, 16, 19). This is what the citizens of earth will face. What follows suggests that they must "be on guard," "arm yourselves," as the overcomers did (with the blood of the Lamb). The "woe" conveys "prophetic gravity."²⁴ An attack or war is anticipated. Why?

"for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath," (vs 12)

Satan was "**cast out,**" "**cast down,**" by God from the heavenly precincts. The new words "the devil is **come down**" reveals that what he now does is of **his own initiative!** The capture of one third of the angelic host was depicted as his initiative (12:4). He has, therefore, a success-

²¹ Mounce, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

²² Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 666.

²³ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

²⁴ Aune, David E.; *52A World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 1-5* (World Books; Publisher, Dallas, Texas – 1997), vol. 2, p. 704.

ful track record – so beware “inhabitants of the earth.” Something new in Satan’s agenda is depicted.

The arrival of Satan to the “terrestrial world” came from an “irreversible decent.”²⁵ His wrath (*orge* – G) was deep. It is now seen as fury, frustration and unmitigating anger.²⁶ We will see more of this wrath later in verse 17.

Contextually, Satan is already experiencing defeat. He was cast out of heaven – but also, the announcement of “overcomers” reveals a group that already has victory through Jesus Christ. This group has already been introduced as the pure woman, the overcomers, with reference to the 144,000. Satan knows prophetically that they will bring into heaven’s fold a multitude too great to even count (7:9). Thus, his anger is not only reactionary but anticipatory. The 144,000 appear to be made up. The “come down” now implies that a new intensity has begun.

Failure stalks his warped ambitions. Adding to this, a third reason for his “state of anger” is now introduced:

“because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (vs 12)

This “short time” “indicates an expectation of the imminent consummation of the kingdom and of Satan’s final defeat.”²⁷ What might this mean? We have already been introduced to 1260 days (vs 6). Soon a time times and half time (vs 14) will be presented. In 11:2-3 and later in 13:5 a three-and-a-half-year period is in view! This alludes to Daniel’s “time of the end” at an “appointed time” (Daniel 8:17, 19; 11:35; 12:7-9).²⁸

The return of Christ with Satan being consigned to the abyss for one thousand years is now in view. Satan knows prophecy. At the end of that three-and-a-half-year period comes this event:

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:1-2).

This reports on the time of Satan’s final and desperate struggle, especially against the righteous, with the immediate anticipation of his “imprisonment!”²⁹

“The great controversy between good and evil will **increase in intensity** to the very close of time. In all ages the wrath of Satan has been manifested against the church of Christ; and God has bestowed His grace and Spirit upon His people to strengthen them to stand against the power of the evil one. When the apostles of Christ were to bear His gospel to the world and to record it for all future ages, they were especially endowed with the enlightenment of the Spirit. But as the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is to work with greater power. He comes down ‘having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’ Revelation 12:12. He will work ‘with all power and signs and lying wonders.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:9. For

²⁵ Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

²⁶ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

²⁷ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 667.

²⁸ *Ibid.*; Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

²⁹ Mounce, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

six thousand years that mastermind that once was highest among the angels of God has been wholly bent to the work of deception and ruin. And all the depths of satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God's people in the final conflict. And in this time of peril the followers of Christ are to bear to the world the warning of the Lord's second advent; and a people are to be prepared to stand before Him at His coming, 'without spot, and blameless.' 2 Peter 3:14. At this time the special endowment of divine grace and power is not less needful to the church than in apostolic days....

"In the great final conflict, Satan will employ the same policy, manifest the same spirit, and work for the same end as in all preceding ages. That which has been, will be, except that the coming struggle will be marked with a **terrible intensity** such as the world has never witnessed. Satan's deceptions will be more subtle, his assaults more determined. If it were possible, he would lead astray the elect. Mark 13:22, R.V."³⁰

"Satan has not been stupid and careless these many years, since his fall, but has been learning. He has grown more artful. His plans are laid deeper, and are more covered with a religious garment to hide their deformity. **The power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is ten-fold greater** than it was in the days of the apostles. His power has increased, and it will increase, until it is taken away. **His wrath and hate grow stronger** as his time to work draws near its close."³¹

"Satan knows that his usurped authority will soon be forever at an end. His **last opportunity** to gain control of the world is now before him, and he will make most decided efforts to accomplish the destruction of the inhabitants of the earth."³²

(To be continued)

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EndTime Issues..., Number 136, March 22, 2012

³⁰ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. ix-xi (emphasis added).

³¹ White, Ellen G.; *Spiritual Gifts*, p. 277 (emphasis added).

³² White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 464-465 (emphasis added).