

Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 1:56 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 12

"Be sober-minded, be watchful! Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour! Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world!" (1 Peter 5:8-9)

We're in the middle of the Tribulation period in our study of Revelation and John is seeing it all in a vision, while on the Isle of Patmos.

Remember last week's lesson on Revelation 11? Continuing the "interlude" between the sixth and seventh trumpet, begun in Revelation 10 and providing one last opportunity for unbelievers to repent and turn to God, and for believers to know that God is still in control! John was given a "measuring rod" and told to measure the temple (in Jerusalem) which wasn't there at the time John received the vision, and isn't there today, but apparently will be there during the time of the Tribulation! Watch for it? (And God, we learned, is into measuring things that belong to Him!)

Then God said He would send "two witnesses" (believed to be Moses and Elijah) who would prophecy about God's coming judgment during the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, clothed in sackcloth, but also having supernatural power to shut up the sky from rain, turn water to blood, and strike the earth with every kind of plague (like in Old Testament days)! But when they had finished their mission, God would allow the beast (Antichrist) to come out of abyss and kill them and, as a sign of contempt and dishonor, allow their bodies to lie on the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days with the world watching, and "those who dwell on the earth" (speaking of unbelievers) actually rejoicing and celebrating, because of the hatred they had, and the great "torment" they felt, from hearing the preaching about God's judgment! (Like today?) But then, after their bodies were lying there for three and a half days, "the breath of life from God" would return to them, and they would stand and be alive again! And great fear would fall upon those watching, as a loud voice from heaven called for them to "come up," and they ascended into heaven in a cloud! And there was an earthquake, and 7,000 died in Jerusalem, and people from all over the world were terrified, but many believed in what MacArthur called, "a saving response"!

Then, Revelation 11:15 says, the seventh trumpet sounded! And there were loud voices in heaven rejoicing and declaring that "the kingdom of the world had become the kingdom of God"! And Revelation closes with the words: "And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm!" All in anticipation of the second coming of Christ, and His thousand-year reign on the earth!

And that sets the scene for our lesson last night on Revelation 12! But it's not what we might have expected!

Revelation 12 is actually a "diversion" back into what John sees happening in heaven, and on the earth (in his vision, after the Rapture of the church) while the tribulation is continuing on the

earth, and Satan is "doing his thing" in heaven, actually before the sounding of the seventh trumpet!

And the focus is on Satan and the great ongoing conflict between God and the forces of darkness, a conflict that has been going on since his rebellion and fall, as "the anointed cherub," way back when, before the creation of the world, when (as verse 4 indicates) he "swept away, with his tail, a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth"! ("How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning!" Isaiah 14:12) We know of his appearance in the Garden, as the "serpent of old," and of his "contest with God" over the fate and "fortunes" of Job and, in our text here, as "the great red dragon who stood before the woman," and sought to deny "the birth of a son, who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron"! And then John sees him "waging war in heaven" with Michael (the archangel) and his angels (during the time of the Tribulation going on in the world at some future time, and getting thrown down to the earth for good, where he will, with great wrath, only intensify his battle against "the woman" and (verse 17 says) "make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (believers during the Tribulation)!

MacArthur calls Revelation 12 a lesson in "seeing things from Satan's perspective"! Constable says it gives John (and therefore us!) a revelation into Satan's activities during the tribulation"! But it seems to cover more!

In verse 1, John sees the first of seven upcoming signs in Revelation, "a woman, clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child...! The "women," it turns out, is a symbol of "Israel" (we believe) as noted by the prophets!

- "Surely, as a woman treacherously departs from her lover, so you have dealt with Me, O house of Israel, declares the LORD!" (Jeremiah 3:20)
- "How languishing is your heart,' declares the Lord God... You adulteress wife, who takes strangers instead of your husband! Men give gifts to all harlots, but you give your gifts to your lovers to bribe them to come to you from every direction for your harlotries... (But then this reassuring message of God's grace!) "Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth!" (Ezekiel 16:30-33, and 60) Wow!

In verse 3, John sees another sign in heaven! "And behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his head were seven diadems!" (Figurative language depicting Satan's dominion of past and future earthly kingdoms!)

The dragon is Satan (also called "the ruler of this world," in John's gospel) who, after failing to deny the birth and life of Christ on earth, turns (with his angels) to wage war in heaven, according to John, against Michael and his angels (in what MacArthur calls "the War of the Ages," or the real "Star Wars"). But he's defeated and, finally, tossed out of heaven for good, much to the joy of the saints in heaven where, for some reason, he still has access, and where he relishes being "the accuser of the brethren before God, day and night"! (This, of course, is speaking of the future and so, we can be sure that Satan, at this point in time, continues to have access to heaven, and to be the "accuser of the brethren" (and that would include us) although we can be encouraged with John's words in verse 11, that "we can overcome him because of the blood of the Lamb...and the word of our testimony"!)

Then the scary words of verse 12: "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time!" (Remember! This is yet to come! We believe during the middle of the Tribulation period, thankfully after believers will be raptured!)

And verse 13 adds that "when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman (speaking again of Israel, we believe), who fled to the wilderness on the wings of eagles, a place God has prepared, where she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (three and a half years)! Wow!

Does this give you a better understanding of the upcoming Tribulation? (John actually has more to share in the coming lessons!)

So, how should we respond, knowing that "our adversary, the devil (on his last-ditch effort to upset God's sovereign plan) prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"?

Sounds like we need to be aware, and alert! And resist him, firm in our faith! And through the Word!

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