

THE GREAT STRUGGLE BEHIND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Rev. 12:6-17

Study #26

Introduction: The curtain has been rolled back between earth and heaven, and we are able to see that a great spiritual conflict is going on between Satan and God and the human race is caught in the middle, for the battle is over us. The battle will intensify greatly in the last days, especially during the *great tribulation*.

I. THE WOMAN (ISRAEL), FLEES FOR HER LIFE (v6)

1. All believers in Jesus, especially the Old Testament people of God, will be fleeing to every corner of wilderness in the world attempting to escape the antichrist's wrath.
2. God has prepared a place for His people to hide. He is going to save a remnant of believers. (Ro. 11:2; 15; 23-26; 2 Tim. 1:12; Ps. 57:1; 121:4; Is. 25:4; 43:1-2)

II. THE GREAT WAR OVER ISRAEL AND GOD'S PEOPLE WILL BE FOUGHT IN HEAVEN (vv7-9)

1. The forces of the spiritual struggle are Michael and his angels and Satan and his fallen angels.
 - The Bible teaches that God has assigned angels to look after and to minister to believers. (Heb. 1:4-14)
 - The Bible teaches that there are ranks and orders of angels, that there are various levels of authority among the angels, both good and fallen angels. (Ro. 8:38-39; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15)
 - Michael is one of the archangels who serves God. He is above all other angels *except* Lucifer or Satan, and he is the guardian angel over God's people.
2. At the end of time a spiritual war will be fought between the forces of good and evil. Satan and his forces will do everything possible to wipe out all believers and to render useless any remaining believer's testimony.
 - Satan and his forces *will be defeated* and cast out of heaven once and for all.
 - A battle will be going on in heaven and earth at the same time.
3. Satan fell from his position with God because of selfishness and pride. He has been described in the Bible as :

"the god of this world who blinds men's minds; the prince of this world; the adversary; the slanderer; the deceiver of the whole world; the tempter; the evil one; the father of lies; the accuser of the brethren; a murderer; Beelzebub; Belial; Abaddon; the angel of the bottomless pit; Apollyon; the enemy; the gates of hell; the great red dragon; a lying spirit; that old serpent; the power of darkness; the prince of devils; the ruler of the darkness of this world; the spirit that works in the children of disobedience; the unclean spirit the wicked one."
4. Satan's purpose in making war against God is twofold:
 - To receive as much power and worship of the universe as possible.
 - To hurt and cut the heart of God. He does all he can to get back at God.

5. Christ has broken Satan's power by:
 - never giving in to the devil's temptation and by overcoming sin. He was perfect.
 - by destroying the devil's power of death. Christ arose from the dead.

III. THE GREAT VICTORY AND SALVATION ARE WON (vv10-11)

1. Loud voices in heaven will shout out that the victory and salvation are won by Christ.
 - Every person who ever believed will have final salvation. (and will shout it out)
 - The great kingdom of God will be established forever.
 - The power of God and Jesus will be proven to all in heaven on earth and in hell.
2. Satan will be barred from heaven and no longer able to accuse believers before God.
(Every time a believer sins, the devil reminds God that man is worthless.)
3. The weapons used to gain victory over Satan will be threefold. Michael and his angels will use these weapons in battle with Satan and will save a remnant of believers.
 - The blood of the lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - The word of the believers' testimony (preaching the Gospel).
 - The loyalty of the believers to Jesus, even unto death. (millions will die).

IV. A WARNING IS GIVEN TO THE EARTH (v12)

1. The rise of the antichrist and his terrible acts will be used by God to judge the ungodly people. God will let man run wild, have his own way and follow the false leader.
2. Satan has been cast out of heaven to the earth. He has been defeated, but not destroyed. He knows that he has but a brief time left and will stir up the worst devastation the world has ever known.

V. THE DRAGON (SATAN) LAUNCHES HIS ATTACK AGAINST THE WOMAN (ISRAEL) AND ALL BELIEVERS (vv13-17)

1. Satan will bring a holocaust unparalleled in human history through the antichrist. His attack will be against all Jews and believers world-wide.
2. God will deliver a remnant, but millions of His people will be slaughtered. Some will be delivered into His arms in heaven and some will be delivered to a place of refuge in a remote safe place. (on wings)
3. Satan will bring a "flood" of tribulation after tribulation of persecution, horror after horror, and trouble after trouble upon God's people.
4. God will use the earth to divert Satan's attacks. (Remember the natural disasters?)

CONCLUSION

1. Satan's attacks have always been devastating. Believers must stand fast in Jesus and proclaim the Gospel even to the point of giving up their lives for it.
2. The blood of the Lamb, the believer's testimony, and the believer's loyalty to Jesus are the only things that will defeat Satan.