

Last week we ended our study of Rev. 8-11 by seeing how God will deal with mankind at the end of time. This week we will see how God deals with Satan and the spiritual forces behind this last great battle for earth and mankind.

We talked about the various views of Jesus return. There are certain things that every evangelical scholar agrees on that studies this book, Jesus IS coming back, He will defeat Satan, He will judge everyone, and He will reign forever.

The question often arises during the study of these passages, "Where is Satan during this time?"

- Some believe he is still in Heaven, accusing the people of God before His throne (Job 1:6; Zech. 3:2).
- We know Jesus death brought about Satan being "driven out". (John 12:31-32)
- Jesus stated that when the disciples went out to do ministry in His name He said, "I saw fall from Heaven." (Luke 10:18)
- Rev. 2, John writes to the church at Pergamum that their city is where Satan has his throne.
- In Rev. 9 we see a star falling to earth.
- Rev. 12:7-9 describes a heavenly battle between Michael and the angels of God against Satan and his fallen angels who are cast down to the earth.

While we may not be for sure where Satan is physically, we do know he will end up on earth and spend his last energies releasing a horrific attack on the people of God. We can be assured of the fact that before Jesus begins His rule on the earth His plans are to destroy Satan, his demonic forces and his followers. That is what chapters 12-14 reveal.

Four elements you need to understand before we go into this section of scripture.

1. There are a lot of images that symbolic and types or foreshadowing of future events. We see this used a lot in the Old Testament where an event will symbolize a future event. For example, the Israelites being held in bondage in Egypt is a "type" of a person today who does not have a relationship with Christ and is in bondage to the world. The Israelites crossing the Red Sea is a "type" of water baptism. We will see references to historic events that have in the past pointed to their fulfillment here at the end of time.
2. The recent destruction of Jerusalem and the temple still weighs heavily on these first century Christians who related to their homeland. There was a natural fear that the Roman army that destroyed their homeland would seek them out as well for persecution and death.

3. John is writing in coded language that the Christians would understand but would not be understandable to the Romans. You will see keywords such as “Babylon” for Rome.
4. There is overlap of timeframes. John uses a style of writing in which he gives an overview and then goes back and fills in the details. He also takes these interludes from what is happening on earth to share something going on in Heaven. Where chapter 6 previews the events of chapters 8-11, chapters 12-14 preview events of chapters 16-20. This can be confusing.

Revelation 12

A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. ³Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. Rev. 12:1-3

We are introduced to three characters who will be featured in the next three chapters.

The woman is representative of Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church both covenant benefactors with God. The child represents Christ who came to be born of a woman and take away the sins of the world. The dragon is Satan and the heads, crowns and horns represent his empire in the earth.

The dragon wants to kill the child as soon as the woman gives birth. This was Satan’s plan through Herod when Jesus was born. The child is born and “snatched up to God”. The woman is carried away to the desert to be protected 1260 days (3-1/2 years of tribulation). *This is not a reference to the rapture as Heaven is never referred to as a desert.*

What is emphasized is that God will always provide a way of escape, protecting us from the overwhelming attacks of Satan.

What is going on behind the scenes in spiritual realm while all this rejoicing is going on in Heaven and all this pain is being endured on the earth? Superimposed over all this is a battle between two spiritual forces.

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Rev. 12:7-9

While Satan has been overthrown he has not been destroyed. Can you imagine the hatred he has toward the people of God in the earth. He now focuses his attention taking as many people as he can with him when he is judged. How are the people of God to respond to this coming attack?

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. ¹²Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short. Rev. 12:11-12

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Rev. 12:17

Revelation 13

We are immediately introduced to two new adversaries who join Satan to form an unholy trinity. The first is a beast from the sea and the second is a beast from the earth. Direct link to **Daniel 7**.

There are a lot of images that relate to first century events. Remember, John is writing to a group of churches at the end of the first century about to experience horrific persecution under the Emperor Domitian. Domitian was referred to as “the beast”. He was one of the first Roman emperors to take on the title, *Dominus et Deus* or “Lord and God”. He demanded people address him as such.

Beyond Domitian the beast also refers to the Roman Empire and the future kingdoms that set themselves up against God.

Some even see references back to Nero and the overthrow of Jerusalem. The Roman army arrived by sea and by land when they attacked Israel in 67AD. The war lasted 3-1/2 years until 70AD when Jerusalem was lost.

The beast is also what many refer to as the Antichrist. The word antichrist is not used in Revelation. John makes reference to **multiple** antichrists coming (1 John 2:18,22), as did Jesus (Matt. 24:24). Their goal is lead people away from Christ.

There are many similarities between the Roman Empire and the empires and kingdoms we have seen throughout history including America today.

The goal of Satan and the beast was to seduce people into following them by believing they were the answer to all the world’s problems. There was no need for God. Similar situation today.

Rome began as a great nation led by selfless leaders but eventually they grew fat, lazy, privileged, and perverse. They created a ruling class that absorbed the wealth while a greater number of people fell into poverty. Roman Senators were selfish and self-absorbed, determined to hoard the huge wealth of the empire and determined to promote empire to enhance their wealth even further. The common people lost all power and were lucky if they had enough to eat. The elite wouldn’t serve in the military so private contractors and mercenaries represented and fought for the empire. "The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America" by Cullen Murphy

God is showing the people what type of attack they will face, it will be spiritual more than physical. The enemy wants to slowly seduce people away from God. That is why later chapters

when this is carried out the system he creates is called the great whore because he wants to steal away the bride of Christ, His church the people of God.

He who has an ear, let him hear.

¹⁰ ***If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go.***

If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed.

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints. Rev. 13:9-10

Rev. 13:11 introduces us to the second beast from the land. This beast is a religious leaders who encourages people to worship the first beast. Later he called the “false prophet”. Being a religious leader many have drawn a conclusion that this a liberal church or universal church or even the Catholic church.

He will perform miraculous sign and wonders, but he “speaks like a Dragon.” v. 11.

He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, ¹⁷so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

¹⁸***This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man’s number. His number is 666.*** Rev. 13:16-18

The mark of the beast has been bantered about for years. Many people wouldn’t have credit cards when they first came out because somewhere in that number something added up to 666. One person I spoke with, their mother would not let them roller skating because at the rink they stamped your hand and that was too much like the mark of the beast.

This mark is a blasphemous anti-mark to the mark on the foreheads in Rev. 7. It is not an actual mark but an allegiance to this Antichrist. The mark itself was the name of the Beast which John writes cryptically in numbers 666 using an ancient device known as gematria. The Greek or Hebrew language did not have symbols for numbers they would write them out. Every number had a letter equivalent. Many scholars date the writing of Revelation before the fall of Jerusalem and they use this as an example to justify their view. When translated from Latin to Hebrew the letters of Nero’s name equal 666.

People have had fun for years trying to use the number to guess who the Antichrist is going to be. Some notables included Hitler (numbers adding up to 666 using the A = 100, B= 101 ,etc. formula), Ronald Wilson Reagan because three names of six letters each. Others include Henry Kissinger, Bill Clinton, and Barack Hussein Obama.

An interesting one relating to a religious leader is, *Vicarius Filii Dei* (Vicar of the Son of God) adds up to 666. Who carries this title? The pope.

Revelation 14

This chapter is difficult to interpret. It consists of a series of disconnected short visions and overlaps the period toward the end of God’s final dealing with man before judgment and wrath begins.

The first vision John sees in verses 1-5, of the Lamb (Jesus) standing on Mt. Zion with the 144,000 is not fulfilled until chapters 20-22.

It is as if God is saying, “hang in there I know it is tough, but this is what will happen if you persevere”.

Then you have three angels flying through the air. The first proclaims the gospel and everyone will know the truth and have a final opportunity to repent.

The second angel describes the fall of Babylon which will be described in greater detail in chapter 17-18. Babylon for now represents the capital city of the final apostate, fallen civilization that is set-up against God. It is a political, economic, and religious society that has rejected God.

Babylon was a code name for Rome among the Christians. They had remembered in their Jewish roots how Babylonians came and overthrew Jerusalem and took their people into captivity.

Finally, the third angel declares what is about to be unleashed...

A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand,¹⁰ he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. Rev. 14:9-10

The next section describes this wrath and gives us a glimpse of Hell vs. saints in Rev. 4:8.

He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.”
Rev. 14:10-11

Then a reminder again to those who follow Christ...

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. Rev. 14:12

Last you see two harvests in chap. 19-20. The first one portrays Jesus harvesting the believers. The second one is an angel harvesting grapes representing those about to face God’s judgment.

What amazingly stark contrasts in these two groups of people. One will face an eternity of bliss though they may have suffered or even faced martyrdom for their faith. The other group chose comfort and the things they could grasp in this life. They chose their own way instead of some burdensome religion where they had to be sold out to God. Their designer religion was on setting their own rules, and what was fair, and inclusive, and fit them.

Remember, this is all happening just after the seventh trumpet is sounded and the seven bowls of judgment are about to be released on the earth.