

The Dragon's War With Heaven

Revelation 12:7-9

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2017-05-14

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Text

Revelation 12 7 War was declared in heaven; Michael and his angels were to wage war with the dragon; so the dragon and his angels made war, 8 but he was not strong enough; neither was there any place found for him in heaven any more. 9 So the great dragon was expelled, that ancient serpent, who is called Slanderer and Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited world; he was thrown into the earth, and his angels were expelled with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice in the heaven saying: “Now the salvation and the power have come, even the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not cherish their lives, even up to death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, yes, you who are dwelling in them! Woe to the earth and the sea! Because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has little time.”¹

Introduction - overview of chapter as a whole

Before we dive into verses 7-9 it might be helpful to have a bird's eye view of the whole chapter. There has been some confusion and quite a few questions after last week's sermon, so let me take us up a mile so that we can see the whole terrain. Sometimes that helps.

In verses 1-4 we have two movie clips shining on the heavens. Both clips move from Genesis 1 all the way up to just before the birth of Christ. They are introducing the two main characters of chapter 12's drama.

So - verses 1-2 show the the first character - the woman, or Zion, or the church of the Old Testament from Genesis all the way up to just before the birth of Christ in verse 2.

Then verses 3-4 begin another snapshot, this time of Satan. It shows a summary history of Satan during the same time period - from Genesis 1 to just before the birth of Christ in verse 4. So verse 2 and verse 4 are referring to the same time period - just before the birth of Christ. So to repeat: verses 1-4 give two visions of two signs in heaven covering the same time period.

Verse 5 starts with the birth of Jesus. Verses 5-6 give the history from the birth of Christ to AD 66, where most of the focus is going to be.

Though I am not dogmatic, I believe verses 7-12 take place at Pentecost of AD 66 - God's last warning to Israel that war was imminent. The other

¹ Translation based on the Greek text of Wilbur Pickering's [The The Greek New Testament According to Family 35](#).

alternative is to see it as right at the beginning of the Festival of Trumpets, which was September 8 of AD 66. But I take it as May because I think it is more consistent with what happened in chapter 8.

Verse 13 explains the heating up of the persecution of the church that happened in May and the months following that almost led to the virtual extermination of the church around the empire. But obviously not everyone was killed. In Matthew 24 Jesus prophesied that if this tribulation had not been cut short, no one would have survived.

The focus of verses 14-16 is on the Jewish Christian remnant that escaped and survived in the city of Pella for the duration of the three and a half year war against Jerusalem.

The focus of verse 17 is on Satan's persecution of the rest of Zion's offspring - that is, the Gentile church that had not been exterminated yet. And according to ancient church fathers, that persecution did indeed almost exterminate the Gentile church and was ended when Nero died in AD 68.

So the chapter as a whole describes incredibly troubling times for the church. Yet in the midst of this worst persecution ever, verses 10-11 form a testimony of faith concerning the total victory of Jesus over Satan. It is looking at the mess through the eyes of faith. Verses 10-11 are the heart of the chiasm of this chapter. In a sense they are the heart of the whole book. And we will look at those two verses next time. So that's an overview of where the chapter is heading.

I. War broke out in heaven (v. 7a) - why would God allow this?

And we are now up to verse 7, which speaks of war breaking out in heaven. And that raises the question, "Why would God allow war to break out in heaven? Isn't heaven the place where everything is perfect?" Verse 7 says, "War was declared in heaven; Michael and his angels were to wage war with the dragon; so the dragon and his angels made war..."

A. *This was not the first time that war had happened in the heavenlies (cf. Dan. 10:12-13, 20-21; 2 Kings 6:15-18; Ps 68:17-18; Zech 1:8-11; 6:1-7; etc.)*

To explain this "why" it is important to understand that this was not the first time that there had been war between Satan's angels and Michael's angels. Turn with me to Daniel 10 and we will read about some intense battles that

happened during a turning point in Israel's exile in Babylon. Daniel 10, beginning to read at verse 10.

Dan. 10:10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. Dan. 10:11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Dan. 10:12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. Dan. 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael [So here is the first mention in the Bible of Michael the archangel - "and behold, Michael], one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Dan. 10:14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."

Let's stop there for a moment before I read anything more from Daniel 10. Daniel had been wrestling in prayer and fasting for twenty one days, and verse 13 says that the moment he started praying God had answered the prayer by sending Gabriel. He didn't get the answer for twenty one days, but the answer was given the moment he started praying. Why the delay? Well, Gabriel explains that the demonic enemies were too powerful for him to overcome and he couldn't get through to Daniel. He had tried. It was not until Michael the archangel came to help him, that they were able to push their way through the demonic armies that were hindering them. This gives you a little bit of a picture of the reality of angelic warfare and the difficulties involved.

And I want to outline several very significant points of information found in that paragraph. The first is that Michael the archangel is also called "one of the chief princes." This is one of several reasons why I have to disagree with David Chilton and other commentators who see Michael as the preincarnate Christ here and as being the glorified Christ in Revelation 12. That is not possible. We'll get to that in a bit. But that phrase indicates that Michael is only one of several chief princes.

Second, there is a counterpart who is fighting Gabriel and Michael, and this counterpart is called the prince of the kingdom of Persia. Every country has an evil angelic prince over it, and this empire had a very high prince that had been assigned to it by Satan. When we think of spiritual warfare we need to realize that America has a demonic prince and each state has an underling demonic prince assigned to it.

Notice in Daniel 10 that there were other evil angelic "kings" over parts of the empire of Persia. Those would be the demonic rulers of the provinces or countries that made up the empire. And apparently they had all joined

together with their demonic armies to oppose Gabriel and his army. Gabriel said in verse 13: "I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia..."

Which leads to the conclusion that good angels are not invincible or always immediately successful in war. They have to fight with all their might, and sometimes their power can be overwhelmed by the enemy until they can get reinforcements. And this in turn proves that this idea of fighting is not just a formality. It is serious business and angels may not always know the outcome of any given battle. That these are real battles is reinforced by the fact that this one battle went on for twenty one days. Verse 13 again: "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia." When we get back into Revelation 12, don't think of the battle as being a two minute token battle. Both sides were no doubt fighting with all their might. There was a great deal at stake. None of this is instantaneous.

So why doesn't God help them by fighting the battles Himself? He could overthrow Satan and his hosts with a word or with a snap of the fingers. But God doesn't. Why? I believe that though God aids us and He aids angels, He does not do the fighting for us. Even angels must use all their energies to engage the enemy. And I believe God does that for our own growth and maturity and to make it clear that though He is sovereign, we must take our responsibilities seriously. These wars are not won automatically, and the American church has lost our battles because we have lost our spiritual weapons which are mighty in God for tearing down strongholds and we have substituted carnal weapons of the world, which are weak. Victory is not automatic. There is strategy, planning, hard work, spiritual warfare, etc.

And this ties in with the next principle, a principle which is just as important as the previous one - there is some connection between Daniel's prayers and fasting and the success of the spiritual battles in heaven. What would have happened if Daniel had not persevered in prayer? We aren't told, but it is implied that there would not have been the breakthrough in the heavenlies.

What is implied here about the connection between Daniel's prayers and the success of the angels in battle is illustrated so well in Exodus 17. In fact, anytime you think of spiritual warfare, it might be helpful to have the image of Exodus 17 in your mind. There was a major battle between Israel and Amalek and during the whole battle Moses raised his hands in prayer on behalf of the Israelite army. Let me read verses 11-13 of that chapter:

Ex. 17:11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he

let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. Ex. 17:12 But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. Ex. 17:13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

It was as a direct result of Moses' prayers that Amalek was defeated, and when he stopped praying to rest, the enemy won. It's a very vivid picture from the physical realm of what happens in the heavenly realm. Gabriel makes it clear that it was Daniel's prayers that got the heavenly battles going. Psalm 76:3 says that it is in the temple, the house of prayer, that God breaks the arrows of the bow, the shield and sword of battle. It was in prayer that the definitive victories on the battlefield were made. And I believe there are hints in Revelation 14 that the prayers of the 144,000 in Pella during this time were no doubt part of the success of the heavenly battles in Revelation 12.

Let's keep reading in Daniel 10, because this forms the main background to Michael the archangel in Revelation 12. We'll resume reading at verse 20:

Dan. 10:20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. Dan. 10:21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince. Dan. 11:1 "Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)

So Gabriel was very much involved in the national politics of Darius the Mede - confirming him and strengthening him. There were angelic battles going on that related somehow to mundane matters such as politics. So with that as background, let's go back to Revelation 12.

B. Notice that it was heaven that declared war and took the initiative (v. 7a-b)

Notice first who initiates the war. Verse 7 says, "War was declared in heaven; Michael and his angels were to wage war with the dragon..." It is Michael's armies that initiate the war. It is only in response to heaven's declaration of war that Satan responds with his own declaration of war: "so the dragon and his angels made war." So the good armies took the offensive.

In terms of timing, this war started in AD 66. But that raises another question: If war started in verse 7, had wars stopped earlier? And why? You see, angelic wars had already been happening in the Old Testament. The verses I listed in your previous point of your outline show some examples. So if there were angelic battles in the Old Testament, and if war is declared in AD 66 in heaven, it implies that there were times when war was not happening. You can't have war starting if war has never stopped. And that

brings up the question of why God would allow war to stop. I don't know the full answer to that question, but my suspicions are that it is that it at least involved the same reason I have already alluded to in Exodus 17 and Daniel 10 - lack of prayer on the part of the church, or lack of faith in the part of the church.

And this reminds us of the lesson of Revelation 8:1-6 - that the trumpets calling angels to battle flow out of the church's corporate gatherings in prayer. It gives prayer a huge place in the Christian life and a huge importance. Prayer is not a mere formality. James says that you have not because you ask not. The world conquest of the Gospel that Christ mandated in the Great Commission is founded on prayer. So an obvious application is that we need to take prayer more seriously. When we get to chapter 14 we will see that the 144,000 provided the prayer cover for this war.

II. The two armies (v. 7b)

A. Michael and his angels

But let's examine the angelic participants in this war. Verse 7 divides the armies up into Michael and his angelic armies and the dragon and his angelic armies.

It has recently become popular in some evangelical academic circles to take Michael the archangel as being Jesus Christ. I strongly disagree. In fact, I think it is close to blasphemy to identify the two. You can read David Chilton's arguments in favor of identifying Michael with Jesus, but I do not find them convincing at all. The most convincing argument is the assumption that some have that 1 Thessalonians 4:6 identifies Jesus as an archangel. They say that He will shout with the shout of an archangel. But it doesn't actually say that. The Greek has three coordinate things that will happen. Jesus will give His command, an archangel will shout, and the trumpet of God will sound. I think J.B. Phillips translation captures the intent when he renders it, "One word of command, one shout from the Archangel [it should be "an archangel"], one blast from the trumpet of God and God in Person will come down from Heaven!"

But let me examine this whole debate and see if I can settle it to your satisfaction. Michael is only mentioned by name four times in Scripture: Daniel 10, Daniel 12, Jude 9, and Revelation 12. In Daniel 10 I do not see how anyone could see Michael as being Jesus. Jehovah's Witnesses do, but I don't see why Christians would. Let me give you eight reasons why I believe

Michael is not Jesus Christ.

First, Jesus is the God-Man, not the God-angel. In fact, Hebrews 2:14-16 explicitly says that God the Son did not take to Himself the nature of angels (ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται) but He took to Himself a human nature with flesh, and specifically, the seed of Abraham. Jesus is not an angel. And people say, "Wasn't He the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament? Wasn't He a messenger of God?" But as we will see, both the words "archangel" and the Hebrew for "one of the chief angels" indicate that whoever this is, he is one with the angels that he leads. But that is not true of Jesus. Hebrews 1:5-9 commands all the angels to worship Jesus. That implies that Jesus is greater than angels.

Second, John has already identified Jesus with the Man-Child who ascends to His throne in verse 5 and rules the nations with a rod of iron. There are four players in this action drama: the woman, the dragon, the man-Child, and Michael. To make Michael Jesus not only messes with the character development, but does so with absolutely no explanation. It makes no sense. Think of it: Christ is explicitly mentioned all through this chapter as the Man-Child and specifically named as Jesus Christ. He is mentioned in verses 1,2,5,10,11,13, and 17. To be so clear in identifying Christ all the way through and then to introduce the archangel Michael as being Jesus without explaining that we have moved from Man-Child in verse 5 to to Michael in verse 7 and then back to Man-Child in verse 13 makes absolutely no sense. But if Michael is not Jesus, but is an angel who leads Christ's armies, it makes perfect sense.

Third, Michael is called "one of the chief princes" of the heavenly angels in Daniel 10. If he had only been described as the chief over the angels, it could refer to the preincarnate Son of God, but not "one prince among several princes." There were seven chief princes among the angels, and many scholars believe the seven angels of Revelation are those seven chief princes, each of whom led one of the seven armies of heaven. Jews had names for all seven, Michael being one of them,² but only Gabriel and Michael are named in the Bible. Well, here is the problem: to lump the preincarnate Son of God in with the other chief princes seems to make Him the same kind of being as the other chief princes. That's exactly what Jehovah's Witnesses try to teach - that Jesus was a created angel before He became a man. Do you see the problem? Michael was a prince along with Gabriel and other peers. Well, the preincarnate Son of God had no peers

2 Jewish literature gives the following names to the seven angels: Michael Gabriel Raphael Uriel Raguel Saraqael Remiel

among angels. Hebrews 1 says that He was greater than the angels. Barnes points out that the expression "one of the chief princes" makes Michael one in the rank of other angelic princes. It identifies him as a true angel. That is why I believe Chilton engages in blasphemy when he identifies Christ with this angel. And he strengthens the apologetics of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Fourth, Daniel's Hebrew word for "chief princes" and the equivalent Greek word for "archangel" in Jude 9 argues that Michael was the lead-angel, not that he was a non-angel who led the angels. There is a difference. Christ is not the first among peers. Prior to the fall of Lucifer, Lucifer was the first among others. But since that time Michael has occupied that space. But the very fact that he is called an archangel, or the first among angels implies that Michael was a true angel, not a Messenger in a general sense.

Fifth, in Daniel 12:1 Michael was said to be an angel assigned to stand guard over Israel in the Old Testament, where other angels had other assignments. Is it really appropriate to say that the preincarnate Son of God was assigned to stand guard over one nation or to be a patron angel of a nation like other angels were? That does not seem consistent with Scripture at all.

Sixth, Jude 9 says this: "Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'" If Michael is the Lord, why would he say, "The Lord rebuke you"? If He is God (the preincarnate Son of God) as many claim, why is He appealing to God? If he was the Lord, he would do the rebuking himself, but he is appealing to someone greater than him.

Seventh, if Michael is the Lord, why would he not dare to bring a railing accusation against the devil? The word "dared not" is *τολμάω*, and is defined this way: "to show boldness or resolution in the face of danger, opposition, or a problem, dare, bring oneself to (do someth.)" So it means that Michael did not have the boldness to rebuke Satan because of the danger of doing so. It implies that Satan was stronger than Michael. That doesn't fit the character of the Preincarnate Son of God at all. It doesn't even fit the character of the Incarnate Jesus. Jesus as the God-Man would certainly dare to rebuke Satan, and indeed did so many times while on earth. He rebuked him sharply, saying, "Get behind me Satan."

Eighth, the word Michael means "who is like God" and implies that even the mightiest angel is nothing like God.

So the bottom line is that Michael is the angelic general who leads the elect

angelic armies of God. He is one of seven generals or "chief princes" leading seven armies altogether. He is one of the seven chief angels of Revelation. And He was the first among those chief angels (the meaning of archangel).

B. The dragon and his angels

And the dragon is Satan, who also has a whole hierarchy of leadership positions for the angels underneath him. Demons are not disembodied spirits of men. They are called angels here, and they are the fallen angels that we looked at in verse 4.

III. This was not a token war - this was all out war

A. "wage war"; "he was not strong enough"

But just as Daniel's war was not a token war, this war was not a token war. Verse 7 says, "Michael and his angels were to wage war with the dragon; so the dragon and his angels made war" and verse 8 adds the note about the dragon: "but he was not strong enough..." In Daniel 10 Gabriel had not been strong enough to take on the prince of Persia, but here Satan was not strong enough to overcome all of Michael's armies. Why say, "but he was not strong enough" if Satan didn't have a chance? That phrase implies that this was a real war that angels had to fight in earnest if they were to win and Satan was eventually overwhelmed.

We aren't told how long the battle went on. The battle in Daniel 10 went on for twenty one days before Gabriel could get through to Daniel, and verse 20 of that chapter says that Gabriel had to go out and continue to fight with the prince of Persia. Apparently Michael was still fighting with both of their armies while Gabriel brought this message, and Gabriel had to go back to join him. So we don't know the total length of that particular war. We don't know if the prince of Persia was routed or not, but based on the history of Persia, it appears that there was ebb and flow with victories on both sides.

Too many Christians look at spiritual warfare as if there are no stakes involved or as if winning were easy for the good angels. But that is not the case. Much is at stake, and battle lines vary from period to period depending upon the state of the church and the faith of the church. My take home is that we must be in earnest in spiritual warfare.

IV. Satan and his angels were expelled forever from heaven (v. 8b-9a; 10b)

Near the end of the section that this chapter introduces (chapter 14), we will see that the 144,000 virgin believers that comprised the Jewish remnant formed the human contingent in this battle and that they were a major part of this victory against Satan. But this verse simply summarizes the victory by saying,

neither was there any place found for him in heaven any more. 9 So the great dragon was expelled

The end of verse 9 says that all of his angels were expelled from heaven as well. "...he was thrown into the earth, and his angels were expelled with him." So AD 66 was the time when heaven was forever purged from the presence of evil. It is my belief (though I am not dogmatic on this point) that the heavenly battle lasted from May 18 until September 8, and September 8 signaled the first trumpet blast for the earthly battles that we looked at in chapter 8. At the end of this battle (which is in the heavenlies) the good angels take the battle to earth.

But be that as it may, verse 11 ascribes this angelic victory to the saints. If the angels were battling, how could the saints be said to have had the victory? We will look at that more next time. But there is a clear link between the spiritual warfare of believers and the spiritual warfare of angels. That point needs to never be forgotten.

V. Historical witnesses (Roman, Jewish, and Christian) of these events

Now, some people are very skeptical that these kinds of things could take place in AD 66 unless there are historical records to back them up. And my reply is that if you take that position that you can't believe the miracles of Genesis 1, or the ten plagues of Egypt, or other miracles of Scripture without historical record. That's not a Christian position. It is not history that judges Scripture, but Scripture that judges history. If God says it happened, it happened whether we have historical evidence or not. God tells us, "Let God be true and every man a liar." In any case we wouldn't expect invisible battles to be recorded by historians.

But it just so happens that these invisible battles were made visible by God for at least a short period of time. Let me give some quotes from early historians of their witness to huge battle in the heavenlies. I gave these quotes in chapter 8, but they are worth repeating because they probably refer to the same event. These battles were recorded by unbelieving Jews,

two ancient Christian fathers, and one Roman historian. Let me quote the unbelieving Jewish accounts first.

Yossipon wrote in Hebrew, and his book has been recently translated. He said,

...Now it happened after this that there was seen from above over the Holy of Holies for the whole night the outline of a man's face, the like of whose beauty had never been seen in all the land, and his appearance was quite awesome.³

So this non-Christian Jew is describing this appearance of a theophany in the shape of a man of stupendous size in the sky, and having a beauty that was awe-inspiring. What happens as a result? He goes on to say,

Moreover, in those days were seen chariots of fire and horsemen, a great force flying across the sky near to the ground coming against Jerusalem and all the land of Judah, all of them horses of fire and riders of fire. When the holiday of Shavuot came in those days, during the night the priests heard within the Temple something like the sound of men going and the sound of men marching in a multitude going into the Temple, and a terrible and mighty voice was heard speaking: "Let's go and leave this House."⁴

Those Jews probably didn't see the whole war being described in this chapter, but God did open their eyes to be witnesses of at least the beginning of it. This unbelieving Jew would have no reason to make this kind of stuff up - especially since it could be used by Christians to prove the truth of Revelation. I think it is an incredibly strong testimony coming from a Jewish historian.

Josephus, another Jewish historian who witnessed the war said,

...a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sunsetting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities.. (War 6:298-299)

He saw angelic warfare. It didn't make a believer out of him, but it turn him into a witness.

An ancient Christian historian from the fourth century wrote a history of this war that was based on earlier Jewish histories (plural) that he had in his possession. He said,

Also after many days a certain figure appeared of tremendous size, which many saw, just as the books of the Jews have disclosed, and before the setting of the sun there were suddenly seen in the clouds chariots and armed battle arrays, by which cities of all Judaea and its territories were invaded. Moreover in the celebration itself of the Pentecost the priests entering the interior of the temple at night time, that they might celebrate the usual

3 Steven B. Bowman (Translator), *Sepher Yosippon, A Medieval History of Ancient Israel* (from the critical Hebrew edition of David Flusser, translated by Steven B. Bowman), prepublication manuscript. The publisher of intent is Harvard Loeb Classical Library.

4 Ibid.

sacrifices, asserted themselves at first to have felt a certain movement and a sound given forth, afterwards even to have heard shouted in a sudden voice "we cross over from here."⁵

So this historian talks about older Jewish eyewitnesses to these spiritual battles.

The Roman historian, Tacitus records these angelic battles in the sky from a Roman perspective. He says,

There had been seen hosts joining battle in the skies, the fiery gleam of arms, the temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds...⁶

The early church historian, Eusebius, had access to early historical records that have since been lost. He says,

But not many days after the feast, on the twenty-first of the month of Artimisius, a wonderful spectre was seen, which surpasses all belief. And indeed, that which I am about to tell would appear a prodigy, were it not related by those who had seen it, and unless the subsequent miseries had corresponded to the signs. For before the setting of the sun there were seen chariots and armed troops on high, wheeling through the clouds around the whole region, and surrounding the cities. And at the festival called Pentecost, the priests entering the temple at night according to their custom, to perform the service, said they first perceived a motion and noise, and after this a confused voice saying, "Let us go hence."⁷

Now, I don't read those accounts to prove that the Bible is true. I believe the Bible's account whether I find historical records or not. But these are witnesses of the very thing that this Scripture said would happen, and which chapter 8 identified as being in AD 66, and which they too said was in AD 66. So the dates correspond.

VI. Why did God allow Satan and his evil angels to have access to heaven's court? (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 1 Kings 22:19-23; 2 Chron. 18:18-22; Zech. 3:1-5)

But that brings up the question that several people have asked me in the last week: "Why did God allow Satan and his evil angels to have access to heaven's court in the first place?" I may not have the definitive answer to that question, but before I try to answer it, let me demonstrate beyond any shadow of a doubt that Satan and his angels did indeed have access to heaven long after Satan's fall.

5 Pseudo-Hegesippus, chapter 44, online text, public domain, translated from the Latin by Wade Blocker. This section corresponds to pages 391-394 in the Latin critical text edited by Vincente Ussani, *Hegesippi qui dicitur historiae libri V*, found in the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* series, volume 66, (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1932).

6 Tacitus, *The Histories: A New Translation*, by Kenneth Wellesley. London: Cox & Wyman Ltd, and Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. Book 5, Section 13.

7 Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, Translated by Christian Frederick Cruse, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1971), Book 3, Chapter 8, Sections 5-6.

First, turn to Job. This is a passage that illustrates what Revelation 12:10 describes as Satan being the accuser of the brethren. Satan had accused believers before God's throne many times. We'll start reading at verse 6.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. Job 1:7 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

Notice that Satan's domain was earth. That was his kingdom. But he still had the ability to appear before God's court in order to accuse the saints once in a while. Verse 8:

Job 1:8 ¶ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" Job 1:9 ¶ So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Job 1:10 Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. Job 1:11 But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" Job 1:12 ¶ And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." ¶ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

And he does the same thing in chapter 2. When he isn't successful in making Job curse God, he asks permission to do more. But he is the accuser of the brethren. That would never happen again after AD 66. Turn next to 1 Kings 22:19-23.

1Kings 22:19 Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. 1Kings 22:20 And the LORD said, "Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?" So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner.

Notice how God doesn't do all the work of the kingdom. He delegates responsibilities and even elicits ideas from angels. They have to think and strategize and come up with good plans. God doesn't do all the thinking for them. God could do any of those things in an instant, but God does not want His creatures to act like robots. Though He is sovereign over every detail, including the actions of evil spirits, they are responsible and their actions are significant.

Anyway, there is an evil spirit who has come up to the heavenly court to see what is going on, and he can't help but offer his evil plan - perhaps thinking that it would thwart God's purposes. Maybe he thinks that he can fool God into thinking that he is trying to help Him. Or maybe he had other reasons for his offer. But it is clear that God uses even evil men and angels to thwart Satan's plans. So continuing to read in verses 22 and following:

1Kings 22:21 Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, "I will

persuade him.' 1Kings 22:22 The LORD said to him, "In what way?" So he said, "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' 1Kings 22:23 Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

So again, we see that Satan and his angels had at least some access to heaven. Why? I believe that God has a perfect plan of the reversal of the fall that is mapped out by the temple festivals that we looked at a couple weeks ago. Each one shows a further progress that is made, with the Festival of Trumpets pointing to God's call to arms, the Festival of Yom Kippur referring to the High Priest coming forth and declaring the temple to be clear, and Tabernacles referring to AD 70 and beyond - the scattering of the Jews and the ingathering of the Gentiles. God has an order for the application of redemption. So part of the answer is that it follows the order found in the Festivals. Part of the answer was given a couple of weeks ago - that Israel itself stood as a symbol of the church, and the crossing of the Jordon River points to AD 70.

VII. Names for Satan (v. 9)

A. great dragon

And even the names of Satan give clues on the battles that he engages in. Verse 9 calls him the great dragon. This shows his immensity and what a formidable foe he was. Because I dealt with that image extensively last week, I won't comment on it now, other than to say that he was a fearful enemy. Dragon slayers risked their lives in fighting dragons, and if you read much ancient history, you know that there were warriors who would get fed up with dinosaurs killing their cattle and even their young ones, so they would go out to do battle. But how many warriors died while fighting a dragon (or what we often call a dinosaur)? Many died. The image represents Satan as a formidable foe.

B. ancient serpent

But verse 9 also calls Satan "that ancient serpent." This is saying that the person who spoke through the serpent in Genesis 3 was Satan. This was the first demon-possessed animal. Snakes don't talk on their own, but they can certainly talk when they are possessed by demons. We saw many examples of demon-possessed animals out in Ethiopia. In any case, God used the cursed serpent as an image or symbol of the cursed Satan.

C. Slanderer/devil

He is also called διάβολος, which is translated as Slanderer here, and as devil in other versions. And after what we read about his slander of Job, what a great name.

D. Satan/adversary

He is also called Satan, which means adversary. And of course, he is the enemy of our souls.

E. The Deceiver of the whole world

And the last name that is given is ὁ πλανῶν - the deceiver. He is the deceiver of the οἰκουμένην, or the Roman world. He was behind that empire.

VIII. Thrown to the land (v. 9)

But the last two phrases indicate that it wasn't just Rome that felt Satan's presence; Israel did too. Verse 9 ends by saying, "he was thrown into the earth, and his angels were expelled with him." Into the earth is εἰς τὴν γῆν, and refers to the land of Israel. This was the specific place on planet earth that they were cast to when they were cast out of heaven. There was a congregating of most if not all of the demons of the world upon the land of Israel from AD 66-70 - a scary thought if you would have lived in that land. It helps to explain the extremely bizarre behavior of both the Roman soldiers and the Israelite soldiers during that war - extremely bizarre. Well, they were inundated with demons.

IX. Further applications

So that is the meaning of the text. What are some additional applications that can be made? I've already made some applications, but let me make six more.

First, the church of Jesus Christ should not just take a defensive posture. We should take our cues from the angels of heaven in verse 7 and declare war on Satan's kingdom. We should go after everything that Satan has captured, praying over those things, taking every thought about those things captive to Christ, and not being satisfied until the demonic kingdom is cast out of the earth just like it had earlier been cast out of heaven. Rather than constantly reacting to what Satan's angels are doing, let's take the initiative and declare war on him. Let's go on the offensive. That's what we do when we go to the abortion clinic, or when we stand up at City Hall to speak against evil agendas, or when we visit congressmen, or when we oppose Statism.

Second, from verse 8 let us be encouraged that Satan is not strong enough to resist a united assault on his kingdom. If the church of Jesus Christ will unite, we can say "Greater are those who are with us than those who are with the enemy." Hopefully that phrase can give you faith that the fight is winnable. Praise God! The dragon "was not strong enough" to win. Be encouraged by that phrase.

Third, since Satan cannot accuse you before heaven's throne any longer, the only way he can be successful with his accusations is if you listen to his inward accusations or you listen to the accusations of others. But you don't need to listen. He no longer has access to God's court room, and what his representatives say to you doesn't matter. Your security is in Christ and it could not be more firmly stated than that the accuser of the brethren has been cast down.

Fourth, don't get bitter at the world; feel sorry for the world. Verse 9 says that the world is deceived by Satan. They think what they are doing is OK, but they are deceived. So feel sorry for them and pray that God would undeceive them.

Fifth, all it takes for unbelievers to lose that demonic deception and bondage is to get converted. So tell the truth to unbelievers. Witness, and watch the Holy Spirit take your Scriptural witness and tear down strongholds.

Last, realize that Satan's expulsion from heaven is but a foretaste of his complete expulsion from earth. This chapter will indicate that that was just the beginning of the long warfare with Satan's kingdom. Zechariah 13:2 prophesies a day when all idolatry and all demons will be cleansed from the earth. There will be a day when there will be no more demons upon planet earth. Jesus promised that of the increase of His kingdom and of peace there would be no end. May we be a part of that process. Amen.