

## REVELATION: HELP FOR LIVING, HOPE FOR LEAVING

### Sermon no. 15

### 7 KEY FIGURES OF THE TRIBULATION, Part 1

#### Revelation Chapter 12

This section is placed between the 7th Trumpet and the execution of the 7 Bowl Judgments. In chapters 12-13, seven important characters of the Tribulation are introduced as an Intermission in Thought and overview. They are:

- 1) A woman clothed with the sun, representing Israel (12:1-2);
- 2) A red dragon, representing Satan (12:3-4);
- 3) A male Child, representing Christ (12:5-6);
- 4) the archangel Michael (12:7-12);
- 5) the offspring of the woman, representing Tribulation believers (12:13-17);
- 6) the beast from the sea, the world dictator (13:1-10);
- 7) the beast from the earth, the religious leader of the world (13:11-18).

While admittedly mysterious, these verses weren't written to intimidate or confuse us. They were written to remind us that God ultimately triumphs and therefore every Christian will. Because God always wins, evil ultimately loses. We will look at the first five characters above in chapter 12, using the three venues of this ongoing spiritual conflict:

#### 1. WAR ON EARTH: PHASE I (Rev. 12:1-6)

This describes a spiritual war throughout earth's history as symbolized by 2 signs in heaven:

- a) **The First Sign in Heaven (Rev. 12:1-2) A woman clothed with the sun: The nation of Israel**
- b) **The Second Sign in Heaven (Rev. 12:3-6) An enormous red dragon: Satan**

- Satan's FALL at CREATION (12:3-4a)
- Satan's FAILURE against CHRIST (vv. 4b-6)

The birth of the child and his being caught up into heaven are Christ's incarnation and ascension. John jumps forward to the Tribulation period, as indicated by reference to the 1,260 days in verse 6. The gap between verses 5 and 6 is the entire church age.

#### 2. WAR IN HEAVEN (Rev. 12:7-12)

The scene shifts to heaven where a tremendous conflict occurs (though still future from our standpoint).

- a) **The Protagonist (Rev. 12:7-8):** Michael and the angels (Dan. 10:13; Dan. 10:21; Dan. 12:1; Jud. 1:9).

This battle occurs at the mid-point of the seven-year period, as described in Daniel 12:1.

## **b) The Antagonist (Rev. 12:9-12)** Satan and his fallen angels

- His Appellations (names): “the great dragon”, “the ancient serpent”, “the devil”, “Satan”, “leads the whole world astray”.
- His Activities:
  - The DECEPTION of Satan (v. 10)
  - The DEFEAT of Satan (v. 11-12a)
  - The DESPERATION of Satan (v. 12b)

How does the Blood of the Lamb conquer Satan in the life of the Christian?

- 1) Because Christ’s victory is our victory. Regard Satan as literally and truly defeated by the death and resurrection of Jesus. By faith grasp your Lord’s victory as your own, since He triumphed on your behalf. (1 Cor. 15:57)
- 2) Because the work of Jesus on the cross for us is the highest demonstration of God’s love (Rom. 5:8) and a constant remembrance of the blood of the Lamb assures us that every fear Satan whispers into our mind is a lie.
- 3) Because the death of Jesus on the cross reveals the true nature of sin, and this makes us want to avoid sin. Satan makes sin seem pleasurable, but the cross reveals its ugliness. If Jesus died because of your sin, you see that sin is a deadly thing.
- 4) Because the death of Jesus on the cross as our substitute bought us as God’s personal property, and this makes us want to live for God.

## **3. WAR ON EARTH: PHASE II (Rev. 12:13-17)**

The scene shifts back to earth as John sees an overview of the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation:

**a) The PURSUIT of Israel (Rev. 12:13-16):** God preserves Israel by a series of miracles (Dan. 11:41).

**b) The PERSECUTION of the Godly Remnant (Rev. 12:17):**

Satan directs his fury against the rest of believers on earth, setting the stage for the description of the two Beasts of Chapter 13, and completing “the unholy Trinity”.

## **Final Thoughts:**

Believers are victors through the victory of the Lord Jesus. Our need is to put on the full armor of God and to resist the devil in the victory of the Savior. Realize that Satan is a defeated foe whose days are numbered.

Truly, we may rejoice with the heavens and those who dwell therein as they are told to do in Rev. 12:12. Because “the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Rom. 16:20). Jesus is the One who gives peace **with** God (reconciliation with God), the peace **of** God (the peace that comforts us in suffering) and world peace (an end to the strife of our war-torn world). Make sure you belong to Him. Make sure you are living for Him.