

“This Means War!” (Revelation 12:1-17)

In my previous pastorate the church that I served was involved in the community outreach, “Heaven’s Gates/Hell’s Flames.” At the conclusion of this powerful drama, I was walking out when a boy about eight-years old approached me and said, “Are you Satan?” [I have black hair and a narrowly cropped black goatee and was wearing a long bright red jacket]. I slowly turned to him and gave my best satanic scare, complete with a sinister laugh. Fortunately, I didn’t scare him too badly because I was quickly able to explain to him that I was actually a pastor that just happened to look like Satan (kidding ☺).

Obviously, this young boy was badly mistaken in his idea of Satan. Apparently, he expected Satan to be an extremely good-looking man [me, of course☺] with a red cape-like jacket. He also may have assumed that beneath my jacket I had horns and a pitchfork. This poor little guy bought into the stereotypical image of Satan. Yet, he is to be commended because at least he believes in a literal Devil. The research of Christian pollster George Barna indicates that nearly 60% of Americans say that Satan is not a living being but is a symbol of evil. His research also indicates that 45% of born-again Christians deny Satan’s existence.¹ Isn’t this sad? We are falling victim to Satan’s greatest deception: to convince us that he does not exist.

Yet the Bible insists that Satan is a powerful, literal, supernatural being who must be taken seriously. From cover to cover, the Bible warns us that we’re in a war! But our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of darkness (Eph 6:12). In Revelation 12:1-17, we will learn the simple principle that we must “know our enemy.” If we fail to know and understand our enemy, we’ll fall prey to his surprise attacks and lose many earthly battles.

1. God preserves His people (12:1-6). In 12:1-2, John writes, “A great sign appeared in heaven: 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; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.” John saw “a great sign.” In John’s writings, a “sign”² is a symbol pointing to something else.³ The fact that this “woman”⁴ is spoken of as “a great sign” emphasizes that John is not referring to a literal woman. Some suggest that it is specifically speaking of the Virgin Mary. Others have identified the woman as the church. Yet, the best option is to understand this woman as a symbolic reference to Israel. This is evident for the following reasons: (1) Israel is often identified as a woman in the Old Testament and is more specifically called God’s wife.⁵ (2) The image of the sun, moon, and twelve stars most definitely seems to be an allusion to Joseph’s dream in Genesis 37:9-11, where the sun and moon are identified as Joseph’s parents and the 12 stars represent the twelve sons of Jacob (ultimately the 12 tribes).⁶ (3) In 12:2, the woman is seen with child, one who rules with a rod of iron (12:5). This can be none other than Christ who, as promised in Scripture, was from the nation of Israel.⁷ (4) The figure of Israel as a woman traveling in birth is found in several Old Testament passages.⁸ (5) The woman will be persecuted in the last half of the tribulation (12:6, 13-17). This is an obvious clue that the woman is to be identified with the nation of Israel, the source of Messiah.

In 12:3, “another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems⁹.” The second “sign” John saw was the “dragon” that God later identifies as Satan (cf. 12:9).¹⁰ A dragon is basically a serpent on steroids (cf. Gen 3:1f.). A dragon is an awesome, destructive creature, like the ones portrayed in the old science fictions movies. A dragon may be mythical and not an actual being, but the Bible draws on the imagery of a terrifying, destructive beast to characterize Satan.¹¹ His “red”¹² color suggests bloodshed and death. The seven heads represent mountains (Rev 17:9) and the ten horns represent kings (Rev 17:12; cf. Dan 7:7-8, 20, 24). We’ll find out more about these heads, horns, and crowns in Revelation 13.

In 12:4, John writes that the Dragon's tail **"swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth."** These **"stars"**¹³ are fallen angels who revolted with Satan at his fall (see Isa 14:12-17; Ezek 28:12-14). At that time, one-third of the angels rebelled with Satan and became his servants in his fight and hatred against Israel and the purposes of God. God cast Satan and these angels out of heaven to earth. That is, they were no longer at home in God's presence though they presently have access to Him. John sees past and present events all brought together in a kaleidoscope. He sometimes will visualize events without identifying all the gaps in between.¹⁴

Verse 4 goes on to say, **"the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child."** Satan knows the prophecies about God's plan of redemption. He also knows that redemption would come through the promised Messiah who would come from the lineage of Israel. So we find him down through time waiting with fangs bared to devour the long-promised Messiah.¹⁵

The not so subtle point is: As followers of Jesus Christ, Satan will also seek to **"devour"** us. Peter writes, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9). If we are believers in Jesus, we can rest assured that we will ultimately be victorious.

In 12:5, we are introduced to the male child of the woman. John writes, **"And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up¹⁶ to God and to His throne."** This is a one-sentence summary of Christ's birth, life, and ascension into heaven. Since Satan failed to destroy Jesus at His birth, during His life, and in His death, Jesus Christ ascended victoriously into heaven.¹⁷ Satan cannot persecute Him there. This verse also teaches that one day Jesus will rule the world with a **"rod of iron"** (Ps 2). This is a reference to Christ's rule over the nations of the world, in the establishment of His millennial kingdom, during His second coming (cf. 19:15). The emphasis of this historical review of Satan's opposition to Jesus is Jesus' victory and Satan's continuing antagonism.

Unable to destroy Christ, Satan turned his attention toward the woman, Israel. In 12:6, we are told, **"the woman fled¹⁸ into the wilderness¹⁹ where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days."**²⁰ John saw Israel as having fled into the wilderness where God protected her 1,260 days (three-and-a-half years) during the second half of the tribulation period.²¹ The passive verb **"prepared"** suggests that God, angels (cf. Dan 12:1), and perhaps Gentiles will care for the Jews at this time. This section can be summarized like this: God's chosen people (Israel) are an important part of His program. Even though Satan has had it in for the Jews, God has preserved His people in both the past and present and will continue to do so in the future.

[In future days, not only does God preserve His people...]

2. God expels His enemy (12:7-12). In 12:7, John writes, **"And there was war in heaven."** The tense of the verb **"was"**²² indicates that John is referring to a future war that will take place during the tribulation period (cf. 12:12). The war pits Michael and his angels against the Dragon and his angels.²³ Michael the archangel (Jude 9) is the leader of God's angelic army.²⁴ In the Old Testament he also had a special role in protecting the nation of Israel (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1). The Dragon, of course, is Satan. Satan's angels are his demons that were once part of God's angels, but earlier fell with Satan. The number of these demons as mentioned in 12:4 was one-third of the total number of the angelic host. This is clearly a spiritual battle in the realm of heaven.²⁵

Fortunately, 12:8 informs us that Satan and his angels **“were not strong enough.”** While the warring was no doubt intense, the Dragon and his angels were not capable of defeating God’s holy angels. The end result is, **“there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon²⁶ was thrown down” (12:8b-9a).** The later half of 12:9 makes it clear Satan and his demonic horde will be **“thrown down to the earth.”** While Satan and his demons, shortly after creation, fell and were cast out of heaven, Satan still had access to heaven to accuse the brethren (cf. Job 1:6-7; 2:1-2 Zech 3:1-2). Satan today still has access to heaven where he functions as the accuser of believers.²⁷ However in this future time, when Satan and his demons lose this heavenly battle he will no longer be permitted access to heaven to bring forth those accusations. In fact, as 12:9 says, **“the great dragon was thrown down.”** The verb *ekballo* (“thrown down”) is a strong verb denoting a powerful throwing or propelling. It is what Laker’s star Shaquille O’ Neal does when he gets the ball down low in the paint—he “throws down” *ekballo* (i.e., slam dunks). The word emphasizes that Satan is cast down out of heaven once and for all. Not only Satan, but also his entire demonic force is permanently limited to the realm of the earth from this point on.

Don’t miss that this is not a battle between God and Satan, but between Michael and Satan.²⁸ It is two created angels and their forces battling each other. Satan has perpetuated the lie that he is God’s opposite. He is not God’s opposite. He is not omniscient, omnipresent, or omnipotent. He is only a created being. He can’t even go one round with God. In our times of discouragement and seeming defeat, we must remember that the powers of good will overcome the powers of evil. Satan and his demonic forces may win some battles along the way but they will ultimately lose the war!

In 12:9, John also gives four descriptive phrases to identify the Dragon. (1) The Dragon is **“the serpent of old.”**²⁹ This title stresses his crafty and venomous character (cf. Gen 3:1-5; 2 Cor 11:3). The word **“old”** (*ophis*) brings to remembrance the first accusation of Satan as the Serpent in the garden of Eden in his temptation of Eve. (2) The Dragon is **“the devil.”** The word “devil” comes from a Greek verb (*diabolos*) meaning “to slander” or “to falsely accuse.” Satan acts as somewhat of a prosecutor in God’s court of law. His tasks are to arraign men before the bar of the divine justice.³⁰ (3) The Dragon is **“Satan.”** The word **“Satan”** (*Satanas*) is a transliteration of a Hebrew word that means “Adversary.”³¹ This proper name depicts Satan as the enemy or opponent of God and His people. (4) The Dragon is **“the one who deceives the whole world.”** The word translated “deceives” (*planon*) means “to mislead, delude, or lead astray.”³² Who is said to be deceived? The whole world!

As John beholds Satan and his angels being cast from heaven, he hears a loud voice in heaven say, **“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night” (12:10).** The loud voice is not identified and probably cannot be with certainty. It does, however, seem best to identify it as the voice of the martyred tribulation saints, for they also cried out with a loud voice (cf. 6:10). This is further supported by the mention of Satan as **“the accuser of our brethren.”**

We learn in 12:11 that these tribulation martyrs (“they”)³³ **“overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”** This verse imparts three weapons that these martyrs will use to overcome Satan. The first weapon is **“the blood of Lamb.”** The blood shed on the cross ensures that God will forgive us (Rom 8:31-34). Thus, Satan’s accusations, however true, are rendered null and void in God’s court of law. So how can we practically apply this truth? First, we have to honestly admit the truth of Satan’s accusation: We are sinners! Secondly, we should remind Satan that the blood of the Lamb covers us. Our sins have all been nailed to the cross of Christ and we will no longer be judged or accused by God for these sins.

The second weapon we have is the word of our testimony (see 1:9; 6:9). This refers to both lives and lips. We must be salt and light to our world (Matt 5:13-16). When we share our testimony, we move into Satan's territory and it's intimidating to him! Our testimony is powerful and irrefutable.

The third weapon we have is a refusal to love one's life.³⁴ These tribulation martyrs were willing to give up anything for Jesus: reputation, status, and possessions. They were even willing to give up their lives for what they believed, even if it meant suffering the violent death of a martyr. They followed the instruction given to the church in Smyrna (2:10) of being faithful unto death as well as the example of the Savior who laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15). They would rather die than prove unfaithful to Christ. Rather than signaling the triumph of Satan, this shows instead that they have gained the victory over the Dragon by their acceptance of Jesus' cross and their obedient suffering with Him. This is one of John's chief themes throughout the book of Revelation (1:9; 6:9; 14:12; 20:4).

The victory of these believers leads to the bittersweet words of 12:12: **“For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. 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.”** Heaven-dwellers can rejoice in view of Satan's punishment (cf. Ps 96:11; Isa 49:13). He is no longer among them. However, everyone living on the earth, especially believers, must beware because he now moves among them more antagonistically than ever. Furthermore he knows that his time is short. He will have only 1,260 days before Jesus Christ returns to the earth and binds him (20:1-2).

[Realizing his time is short, Satan pulls out the stops and....]

3. Satan persecutes God's people (12:13-17). Once Satan is cast out of heaven, he will give his full attention to persecuting³⁵ the woman who brought forth the male child (12:13). His intense hatred of Israel will reach its climax during the great tribulation, as he tries to do everything in his power to destroy them. Satan knows that if he can destroy Israel, he can thwart God's program, keeping it from coming to ultimate fruition. But the miraculous hand of God will be upon Israel in the midst of Satan's plot to destroy them, providing a way for them to escape. John writes, **“But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness³⁶ to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.”³⁷** The Israelites will receive divine assistance in fleeing from the Dragon (passive: “were given”). God bore the Israelites “on eagles wings” when He enabled them to escape from Pharaoh (Exod 19:4; Deut 32:11). God often uses this metaphor to refer to His protection of Israel (Ps 55:6-8; cf. Isa 40:31). Therefore we should probably understand the eagle to be metaphorical, describing the way God will save them, namely with strength and safety. The comparison between an eagle that can fly overhead and an earth-bound serpent implies the superior protection of God.

In 12:15, the Serpent retaliated. John records that he **“poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.”** The text indicates that the water is **“like”** a flood, making it difficult to tell if the flood should be interpreted literally or figuratively. Perhaps Satan will use literal water to try to drown this group of Israelites. Another possibility is that he will pursue them with soldiers as a river (cf. Jer 46:7-8; 47:2-3; Ezek 38-39). A flood is also a biblical metaphor for overwhelming evil (Ps 18:4; 32:36; 69:2; 124:2-4; Isa 43:2). Probably this is a picturesque way of describing Satan's attempt to destroy the Jews who will have congregated in Palestine following the Antichrist's covenant with them.

Fortunately, **“the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth” (12:16).** In the past the ground swallowed the Egyptians (Exod 15:12) and later Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num 16:28-33; 26:10; Deut 11:6; Ps 106:17). Perhaps God will do similar miracles to preserve the fleeing Jews in the future.³⁸

After having his great wrath thwarted, **“the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”** Satan is now three times a loser. He has failed to destroy the man child (12:1-6), he has lost the war in heaven (12:7-9), he has been unable to destroy the woman (12:13-16), and thus his wrath is directed toward the **“rest of her [the woman’s] children.”** I understand these **“children”** to be any true child of God, Jew or Gentile. Regardless, it is important to note that Satan wars with those **“who keep the commandments of God”** (1 John 5:2-5) and **“hold to the testimony of Jesus”** (1 Cor 2:1-2; 1 John 5:11-12).” As Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12: “If you live a godly life in Christ Jesus, [you] will be persecuted.” The Christian life is not a playground; it’s a battleground! If you live for Jesus Christ in this life, there will be suffering but the rewards will be eternal.

I grew up watching Pac-10 football. I’ve always been a University of Washington, Husky fan. Of course, I was familiar with Arizona State University’s Pat Tillman. Tillman was a great football player who gave up a 3.6 million-dollar NFL contract to be a US Ranger. This past Friday (5/23/04) he gave his life for the freedom of his country. Pat Tillman is one of my heroes. But there are even greater heroes in this world...they are spiritual heroes who **“keep the commandments of God,” “hold to the testimony of Jesus,”** and lay down their lives. These are heroes that this world is not worthy of (Heb 11:38). Will you recognize that you are in a spiritual war and the enemy of your soul wants to devour you? Will you commit yourself to seek Jesus and cling to Him in the midst of this warfare? If so, you will realize the abundant life that Jesus Himself spoke of (John 10:10).

Copyright © 2004 Keith R. Krell. All rights reserved. All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, and 1995 by The Lockman Foundation, and are used by permission.

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any articles written by Keith Krell, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: by Keith Krell, Timeless Word Ministries, 2508 State Ave NE Olympia, WA 98506, 360-352-9044, www.timelessword.com

Notes

¹ These statistics are from 2001. Barna's research also indicates the following: 45% of born again Christians deny Satan's existence. (2001); nearly seven out of ten Catholics (68%) say the devil is non-existent, compared to 60% of Protestant mainline church attenders, 51% of Baptists and 50% of Protestant non-mainline church attenders who agree that Satan is only a symbol of evil (2001); men emerge as slightly more likely than woman to believe that Satan is just a symbol of evil (61% to 55%, respectively) (2001); and two-thirds of adults (69%) are aware that the Bible describes Satan, or the Devil, as an angel who formerly served God in Heaven (1994). See The Barna Group: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=6> (4/25/04).

² Usually John uses the word "sign" (*semeion*) to describe something miraculous that points to some deeper spiritual significance connected with an event or object (cf. John 2:11, 18, et al.).

³ While no signs appear in Revelation 1-11, seven signs are mentioned in chapters 12-19 (cf. the seven signs in John 1-11). Three signs are in heaven (12:1, 3; 15:1) and four are on earth (13:13-14; 16:14; 19:20). Only one is a sign of good (12:1); the others are omens of evil or judgment from God.

⁴ There are four women mentioned in Revelation. These are (1) Jezebel (2:20), a woman who claimed to be a prophetess in the church of Thyatira, and who stands for false teachers within the church in the church age; (2) the harlot (17:4), the false religious system of the last days, apostate Christendom; (3) the bride (19:7), the true church, glorified and returning with Christ; and (4) the woman (12:1), the nation Israel.

⁵ Cf. Isaiah 54:5,6; Jeremiah 3:6,8; 31:32; Ezekiel 16:32; Hosea 2:16.

⁶ This identifies the woman with Israel and the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.

⁷ See Matthew 1:1-25; cf. also Psalm 2:8-9; Revelation 2:27; 19:15.

⁸ Evidently this represents Israel's pain before Jesus Christ's appearing at His first coming (cf. Isaiah 26:17-18; 66:7-12; Hosea 13:13; Micah 4:10; 5:2-3).

⁹ Diadem crowns were a type of crown used as a symbol of the highest ruling authority in a given area, and thus often associated with kingship. The NET Bible <http://www.bible.org/netbible/>

¹⁰ The word "dragon" (*dragkon*) occurs 12 times in Revelation and nowhere else in the New Testament. In every instance it refers to Satan (12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:2, 4, 11; 16:13; 20:2).

¹¹ Tony Evans, *The Battle is the Lord's* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 123.

¹² The term "red" (*purros*) means, "fiery red." It denotes either "flame-colored" to depict destruction or "blood-red" to denote murder.

¹³ The Scriptures often use the term "stars" for angelic beings and specifically of Satan (e.g., Revelation 9:1; Job 38:7; Isaiah 14:12; Luke 10:18).

¹⁴ See also Erwin W. Lutzer, *The Serpent of Paradise* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 169.

¹⁵ Beginning in the book of Genesis, we see Satan's numerous attempts to devour the future Messiah's line.

- Satan motivated Cain to kill Abel (Genesis 4:1-8). But God raised up Seth as the seed and the lineage continued (Genesis 4:25).
- Satan caused such evil to pervade the earth that God destroyed everyone but eight people in the flood (Genesis 6:17).
- Next, Satan motivated Esau in an attempt to kill Jacob, Isaac's son of promise (Genesis 27:41).
- After that, Satan gave Pharaoh the idea of killing every Hebrew male baby. Again, the plan failed (Exodus 1:16; Acts 7:17-19).
- Satan also tried to have Saul kill David because it was prophesied that the Messianic line would come through David (1 Samuel 18 ff).
- Later, Haman tried to kill all of the Jews in the kingdom. Instead, Haman was hung on his own gallows (Esther 3-9).
- One of the most amazing accounts is found in 2 Chronicles 21-22. Here we read that the entire royal seed of Israel was completely wiped out except for one, Joash, who was hidden for six years. All Messianic hope was one baby away from complete obliteration! But God preserved the seed.
- After the Jesus was born, Satan tried to kill the child directly using Herod (Matthew 2:3-8). But God intervened as he had so often in the past, and protected the infant Jesus by warning Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt beyond the reach of Herod (Matthew 2:13).
- In Luke 4, people tried to kill Jesus; in Matthew 4, Satan himself attempted to kill Him, telling Jesus to throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple.

- After all of these failures, Satan still persists in afflicting Israel because God promised He will reign from there. Throughout history, we have seen Satan’s attempt to wipe out God’s plan in the persecution of the Jews. It is Satan-inspired anti-Semitism.

¹⁶ The phrase “caught up” (*harpazo*) means, “to suddenly seize or snatch away.” This Greek word is used in reference to the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, in describing Paul’s being caught up to Paradise in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, and in reference to the Spirit of God catching up Philip in Acts 8:39.

¹⁷ Jesus Christ was born of Jewish descent (Matthew 1:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:8). Despite Satan’s efforts to destroy Israel and the messianic line, Jesus’ birth took place as predicted by the prophets.

¹⁸ Those Israelites who flee (Revelation 12:6, 16) will be protected by God, but those who stay will come under Satan’s attack. This is why in Matthew 24:15-18 Jesus warned Israel to flee Jerusalem when they saw the abomination of desolation in the temple. Evidently many Israelites will flee from Jerusalem into desolate places to escape Satan’s persecution (cf. Zechariah 14:1-8; Matthew 24:16; Mark 13:14).

¹⁹ Throughout Scripture a wilderness often represents a place of desolation, safety, discipline, and testing. It is unclear exactly what wilderness area that those from Judea will flee to. Most suggest the areas of Moab, Edom or Ammon, which all lie east of Israel and will be spared from Antichrist’s attack on Israel (cf. Daniel 11:41).

²⁰ Revelation 12:1-5 has been somewhat reflective, however 12:6 is somewhat anticipatory of what will be described in 12:13-17.

²¹ This destructive time is called the great tribulation or the time of Jacob’s trouble. This flight into the wilderness is predicted by Christ in His Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:16ff and takes place immediately after the abomination of desolation mentioned in Matthew 24:15. So the flight takes place at the mid-point of the tribulation and God will protect those who flee during the remaining 3 1/2 years.

²² It is at this point that we are told that there was war in heaven. The verb “was” (*egeneto*) is in the aorist and as it is used here carries the force of “came to be” or “arose.” There came to be a war in heaven or there arose a war in heaven. This is best translated as it is in the New King James Version, “And war broke out in heaven.”

²³ This is not Michael’s first encounter with Satan: He overcame Satan when an angel was battling Satan for 21 days (Daniel 10:13) and he disputed with Satan over the body of Moses (Jude 1:9). But the conflict in view here evidently takes place just before the last half of the tribulation.

²⁴ Michael’s name is a composition of: *mi*, “who,” and a preposition, *ke*, “as or like,” and the noun *El*, “God.” Michael means, “Who is like God?” Of course the answer is, “No one!” It is interesting that God sends Michael to defeat Satan whose boast in Isaiah 14:14 is, “I will make myself like the most High.”

²⁵ It is unclear exactly how these two forces will battle each other since our human picture of war is strictly material.

²⁶ Satan is called “the great Dragon” because he is fierce and cruel in nature.

²⁷ Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:12 that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood...but against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” It’s so important to realize that other people are not really our problem. Our real opponent is the Devil and his army of wicked spirits who manipulate people and events. Where are the Devil and his allies? In the heavenly places—they still have access to heaven.

²⁸ “Let us not forget that at one time Michael and Satan (previously called Lucifer) were colleagues, they served the same master and had essentially the same responsibilities. Since it is likely that Michael at one time served under Lucifer, the loss of this battle was especially painful for the Devil. He was thrown out of heaven by one who at one time had been his underling.” See Lutzer, *The Serpent of Paradise*, 170.

²⁹ The identification of Satan as a serpent occurs five times in the New Testament (cf. Revelation 12:9, 14, 15; 20:2; 2 Corinthians 11:3).

³⁰ This is best evidenced in the book of Job as Satan acts as Job’s accuser before God (cf. Job 1:9-11; 2:1).

³¹ The Aramaic corresponding to originally meant, “one lying in ambush for.”

³² Satan causes people loved by God to miss the plan and truth of God by (1) lying against the truth; he is the father of lies (Genesis 3:1-5; John 8:44); (2) denying the truth (1 John 4:3 with 2 Peter 2:2); (3) counterfeiting or imitating the truth (2 Corinthians 11:3-15); and (4) perverting or distorting the truth (1 Timothy 4:1-5 with Galatians 3:1-3). He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and masks his true identity in order to deceive the nations.

³³ The pronoun “they” (*autoi*) refers to believers whom Satan formerly accused before God.

³⁴ E.g., Revelation 2:10; Matthew 16:25; Luke 9:23; 17:33; John 12:25; and Acts 20:24.

³⁵ There is a double meaning in the word translated “persecuted” (*dioko*). This Greek verb can mean either “persecuted” or “pursued.” In this context, both means are present. See also Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation: ECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 482.

³⁶ Scripture does not identify the location of “the wilderness” where God will protect and nourish this remnant of Jewish people. Many believe it will be in the area of Edom because this country will escape the wrathful destruction of the Antichrist during the tribulation (Daniel 11:41). This could well be the place because Christ will come to Edom upon His return to take vengeance on the people of Bozrah and possibly to deliver a remnant of Jewish believers (Isaiah 63:1-6).

³⁷ God takes care of Israel during this period similar to Elijah’s experience by the brook of Cherith or that Israel experienced during the forty years when they lived on manna in the wilderness (1 Kings 17:1-7). Whether natural or supernatural means are used, it is clear that God does preserve a his people

³⁸ Bear in mind that two-thirds of these Israelites will die (Zechariah 13:8) and one-third will escape. Some of those who perish will probably be believers (cf. Revelation 12:11).