

Revelation Lesson 8

Reading: Revelation 12-13

Memory Verse: Revelation 12:10

Definitions:

Archangel – The highest order of angels, with specific, important ministry.

Accuser of Our Brothers – Satan

Anti-Semitism – hostility toward or discrimination against Jews

After reading the lesson, answer the questions using the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc93R-1vczsT_91JAF0Oyvmz-nurfNKfDDEJRnKwpJLGtMz8A/viewform?usp=sf_link

Know your enemy

Ever since his first rebellion against God, Satan has actively sought to keep people from following God. The following are actual quotes from people who have fallen for his deceptions. As you read them, imagine what the people who made these statements will use for a defense when they stand before God in judgment.

- *First of all, you must understand that I do not take the Bible literally. I see it more as one giant metaphor. Therefore, to me, Satan is actually an idea, a concept. To me, Satan is a symbol of the negative forces and situations that we often try to escape.*
- *Satan is just another servant of God, one created as an instrument of temptation and punishment. The struggle between God and Satan is in a sense a sham since Satan is never out of God's control and his defeat is inevitable. Thus, to worship Satan is to worship not a powerful and independent figure of evil, but a servant who has an unpleasant task to perform but no real power to grant any favors.*
- *Satan, our intellectual muse and inspiring Patron Saint, is the symbolic banner of intelligence and success in life.*
- *I do not believe I have any immorality. The greatest evil in the world today is the Christian religion.*
- *I am not afraid of dying and going to Hell or (what would be considerably worse) going to the popularized version of Heaven. I expect death to be nothingness, and for removing me from all possible fears of death, I am thankful to atheism.*
- *The skeptic has no illusions about life nor a vain belief in the promise of immortality. Since this life here and now is all we can know, our most reasonable option is to live it fully.*

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Satan will continue his fight into the future. Revelation 12 and 13 describe his activities as his time runs out. These chapters revolve around Satan, personified as a dragon, and his involvement with five other characters. Let's look at them and see what happens.

Woman (12:1-2)

The first character is a woman clothed with the sun. She is the nation of Israel in labor with the male child of verse 5. The 12 stars in her crown represent the 12 tribes of Israel.

Male Child (12:5-6)

The baby born to the woman Israel is Christ. He is taken to heaven, indicating his ascension after His resurrection. Anti-Semitism will be so strong at the midpoint of the tribulation that Jewish people will have to flee for 1,260 days, half of the tribulation period, in order to stay alive.

Great Red Dragon (12:3-4, 7-17)

This dragon is Satan, who took a third of the angels with him when he first rebelled against God (*his tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky*). Banished to earth, Satan pursues the woman Israel. Throughout the centuries, he has hated God's chosen people and has tried to wipe them out. The Old Testament and subsequent history chronicle his attempts.

These verses picture Satan as ready to devour the woman's child. When Jesus was born, Satan tried to kill him through Herod, who killed all the boy babies two years old and younger. (See Matthew 2:16-18) When that plan failed, he tempted Jesus in the wilderness to bypass the cross and God's plan for our salvation. Failing again, he attempted several times to kill him through the Jewish leaders. That worked, but not long. Three days later Christ rose from the dead.

Then Satan turned his attention to God's people to keep them from living for the Lord. He also continues to try to keep nonbelievers from becoming Christians. According to revelation, he is still working on the same plan in the future. (Satan is either desperate or a slow learner. Both, Maybe?)

Michael (12:7-12)

In the future, Michael, an archangel, will get involved in this battle. He will war against Satan and his angels. At the midpoint of the tribulation, Satan is *hurled to the earth*, marking the beginning of his ultimate defeat: *For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down (v. 10)*. Daniel predicted this event in Daniel 12:1.

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Following that action, a loud voice from heaven announces salvation: *Now have come the salvation and the power of the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ (v. 10)*. This is not salvation from sin but deliverance and the fulfillment of God's program.

Beast from the Sea (13:1-10)

But Satan empowers two characters during the tribulation. The first is the beast from the sea, the Antichrist. He is a political leader, a world dictator who opposes Christ. He rises from the sea of the Gentile people of the world.

In attempting to be equal to God, he blasphemes God and things and people associated with Him.

He wars against believers and exercises his power over all people to the extent that all those who do not belong to God worship him.

Beast from the Earth (13:11-18)

The second character under Satan's control is the beast from the earth. He is the false prophet who imitates Christ. He has the same power as the antichrist and gets people to worship the antichrist. The beast performs miracles and gives the mark of 666, without which no one can buy or sell.

Despite Satan's victories during the tribulation as well as now, we need to remember that God is greater and is in control of world events. Satan *will* get his due.