

# A WAR IN HEAVEN

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A war was fought in heaven in Revelation 12:7-9. In verse seven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (Satan) and his angels. In verse eight, Michael and his angels prevailed, and in verse nine, Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven into the earth. What was this war in heaven, and when did it occur? There are important and valuable lessons to be learned from studying the scriptures that answer these questions.

## **The spiritual father of those who disobey God**

Revelation 12:9 identifies Satan as being responsible for deceiving the whole world. Mark 4:15 says that he is the one who takes the word of God out of the hearts of men after it is sown there. These are the people, the wayside soil, that God's anger is revealed against because they refuse to glorify Him as God (Rom 1:18-21). He sends them a strong delusion that they may believe a lie, because they believe not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thes 2:10-12). Jesus teaches that those who do not obey him are children of the devil (John 8:44). "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 John 3:8).

Whether or not we *do righteousness* (i.e. obey God) reveals whether we are children of God or the devil (1 John 3:10). Jesus will save all who obey him (Heb 5:9), but will punish those who do not (2 Thes 1:7-9).

## **Satan's origin**

There is a strong denominational tradition that says Satan was once a faithful angel of God who then led an unsuccessful rebellion in heaven to overthrow God, following which Satan was expelled from heaven along with his followers, and they have been fighting against God ever since. Revelation 12:7-9 is sometimes misused to try to support this tradition of men. But this passage is *not* speaking about the origin of Satan, because this war was fought *after* the world was made. First, Satan had been in heaven accusing the brethren day and night (Rev 12:10). There would have been no brethren to accuse before the creation. Second, Satan was then "cast out into the earth" (Rev 12:9). Therefore, the earth was already standing at the time of this war. Revelation 12:7-9 describes the war that is being fought between good and evil after the creation. The Bible makes absolutely no mention of where Satan came from. What God does not reveal must remain unrevealed (Deut 29:29). We must not lean to our own understanding, or use our own imagination about anything, including Satan's origins (Prov 3:5). Rather, we must speak only what God says about any subject, including Satan (1 Pet 4:11). What we believe should be in God's word (Rom 10:17). God obviously did not deem it important or necessary for us to know where Satan came from. What is important is

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to understand who Satan is now, what he is trying to do to us and all other men. And that is one of the very key points of Revelation 12:7-9.

## **Winning the war**

Revelation 12:4-11 shows Satan's opposition to God and His work, but also Satan's ultimate failure. Satan unsuccessfully tried to stop God's work of sending the "man child" into the world, and the man child was exalted to God's throne as ruler of all (Rev 12:4-5). Satan then turned against the woman who brought forth the child, but verse six says that "the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." God protected the woman against Satan. In verses 7-9, Satan lost his war against heaven itself, and the result of that defeat is explained in verse ten: "*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*" God's work through Christ of bringing salvation to man and establishing his eternal kingdom (the church) was with strength and power and Satan could not stop it. As we notice Satan's work of falsely accusing God's children (see also Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5), we recall that the very name "Satan" literally means *accuser* (something we should think seriously about before we succumb to the temptation to falsely accuse a fellow Christian). Satan's complete failure is encapsulated in verse eleven: "*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*" God has provided the way for man to overcome Satan, and that victory will occur with the three components outlined in verse 11. Christ's shed blood is necessary and sufficient for both providing the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:22) and also the way to stop committing sin (Eph 6:10-17; Heb 9:14; 13:20-21; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:1). Access to Christ's blood comes by hearing and obeying the word of God (Rom 10:17; Acts 2:38; Heb 5:9). Finally, the victory will only be won by those who live *only* for God, and serve Him to the point of dying if that is what is required to resist sin (Luke 14:26-33; Php 2:5-8; 2 Cor 5:14-15; Heb 12:1-4; 1 Pet 4:1-2; Rev 2:10). As 1 John 5:4 says, "*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*" We can and must overcome, and, "*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son*" (Rev 21:7).