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Introduction: The first section of Chapter 12 (vv.1-5) introduced us to the major players in the great spiritual war of the ages. All of this was shown to the Apostle John in the form of a vision in heaven. Two great *signs*, or symbols of other things, were shown to him. As we saw in the previous study, the first sign, the woman with child, represented Israel. The Child in her womb was the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. And the second sign was a dragon who controlled a third of the stars of heaven with his tail; this represented Satan and the host of demons. They are the players in a great spiritual war which started with Lucifer's (Satan's) rebellion in heaven and continues today. And it will continue right up to the very end of the age, when Satan will ultimately be cast into Hell. The war has taken place both in heaven and on earth. It is played out both in the spiritual and earthly realms. In the Scripture, we see glimpses of it all the time (Satan is seen tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden, he is behind many attempts to tempt, deceive and destroy Israel, he is seen tempting the Lord Jesus, he is described as blinding people to the truth, accusing the brethren, seeking whom he may devour, deceiving people as an angel of light, etc.).

What the rest of Chapter 12 describes is the beginning of Satan's end. His final defeat and casting out of heaven is seen (remember that he was seen in the Book of Job as having access to God's throne) after a great war there with Michael fighting for God. His heavenly defeat is final, and he will be cast out for good and come to the only place he still can, earth (before his being cast into Hell eventually, that after a 1,000-year binding in the bottomless pit), where he will act in great rage towards the woman (Israel) for one more season, during the Great Tribulation, the last 3-1/2 years of the 7-year time of tribulation. Israel will be protected and Satan will ultimately be defeated on earth during this time and when the Lord Jesus Himself returns.

1. Verse 6 - Israel's flight into the wilderness.

- v.6 - Because this happens for a period of 1,260 days (i.e., 3-1/2 years), it is easy to see that it corresponds perfectly with Daniel's "abomination which causes desolation" (Daniel 9, see previous studies). At the mid-point of the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy, there will be corresponding events in heaven and on earth: this flight of Israel, and a heavenly war (v.7; also see Matthew 24). Satan will try to destroy Israel once and for all, but he will be foiled, as **God** will protect Israel. Many Israelites will indeed die (Zechariah 13:7-9), but God will preserve a remnant and they will survive as a nation.

2. Verses 7-12 - War in heaven.

- vv.7-8 - This **war** is the final battle of a war that has been going on since Satan's initial rebellion. Satan and demons operate in the heavenlies, accusing the brethren before God. That will end here.

NOTE: The Book of Jude also refers to Michael fighting with Satan.

- v.9 - **that serpent of old** refers to the first deception of man in the Garden of Eden. The name **Devil** refers to a slanderer, i.e. one who makes false accusations about another. The name **Satan** refers to one who stands against all that is good and right, a great opponent. The finality of Satan's defeat seems to be emphasized by the use of these multiple titles.

- vv.10-11 - There is great rejoicing in **heaven** when Satan is defeated there and cast out for good. The conventional wisdom of the age portrays Satan as some sort of ruler ruling from Hell (Satan himself is no doubt the father of such lies). Actually, Satan is very active both in heaven and on earth.

The heavenly aspect of his work ends with this war with Michael. The **they** of v.11 is the same as **our brethren** and **them** of v.10. That is, believers in heaven are part of the fight and triumph! How are the falsely accused victorious? 1) **by the blood of the Lamb**; 2) **by the word of their testimony**; and 3) by **not loving their lives to the death**. Christ's blood redeems us, and our faithfulness to the truth of our testimony or confession of Christ our Lord, manifested by even giving our lives for that truth, all defeats the lies of the devil. The truth of Christ's work, manifested in the testimonies of the redeemed, conquers all the false accusations of Satan. Remember how Satan accused Job: he said he would blaspheme God when tested. But he did not. Likewise, the believer in Christ conquers the false accusations of the devil by faithful perseverance.

- v.12 - The rejoicing in heaven means **Woe** to the **earth**. Satan comes for his last stand. But **he knows** his **time** is **short**.

3. Verses 13-17 - Defeated in heaven, Satan wages earthly war against Israel and any remaining followers of Christ.

- v.13 - **persecuted the woman** Satan goes to work attacking Israel.

- v.14 - Israel is divinely provided a great escape. **a time and times and half a time** i.e., 3-1/2 years, or 1,260 days. See Daniel 7:23-25. This is the period of the Great Tribulation, the second half of the 7 years.

- vv.15-16 - The **flood** is probably a reference to persecution in the form of armies pursuing Israel's flight to destroy her. That she will be **helped** by the **earth** refers to the fact that the terrain and location of her escape will foil the enemy's plans. It is possible one of the aforementioned earthquakes or other divine judgments will destroy this Satanic assault.

- v.17 - Satan's inability to destroy Israel will enrage him further, and he will lash out against any of the tribulation saints (those who came to faith in Christ after the Rapture, Jews and Gentiles) still alive in the world he can find.

NOTE: They are described as the **rest of her offspring**: the true offspring of the woman are believers in Christ.

NOTE: As it is now, so it will always be: those who are true believers in Christ will both believe the Gospel and have the fruit of obedience in their lives.