

• Seven small visions with seven key figures

In Revelation 11:19–15:4 John tells us seven times of something that he saw. The words ‘I saw’ (or something similar) come in 13:1, 11; 14:1, 6, 14; 15:1, 2. So there are seven small visions^{□1} with some preliminaries in 11:19–12:17 to prepare us for the visions. There are also seven key figures in this section: (i) the woman^{□2}, (ii) the dragon^{□3}, (iii) the Male Child, (iv) Michael and his angels, (v) the beast from the sea, (vi) the beast from the land and (vii) the Lamb. The Lord Jesus Christ has ascended to a position of kingship and authority^{□4}. Revelation 12:7–17 goes on to tell us of what happens as a result.

□1 in 12:18–13:10; 13:11–18; 14:1–5, 6–13, 14–20; 15:1, 2–4
 □2 12:1-6
 □3 12:3
 □4 11:19-12:6

Because of Jesus’ exaltation, Satan lost his authority in heaven

Because of Jesus’ exaltation, Satan lost his authority in heaven. ⁷Then there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸And the dragon and his angels lost the battle and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient snake, he that is called ‘the Devil’ and ‘Satan’, the deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. As Jesus is exalted to heaven^{□1} Satan is removed from his position of authority in the heavenly realm. The senior angel, Michael, and the other angels of heaven forcibly removed Satan from his position of authority. Because of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan is no longer able to accuse the people of God in heaven itself. The cross has paid the price of sins. The ground for loading guilt upon God’s people in the presence of God has been removed altogether.

□1 12:1-6

• The ground for loading guilt upon God’s people in the presence of God has been removed altogether

Because of Jesus’ exaltation and Satan’s fall the inhabitants of heaven rejoice

Because of Jesus’ exaltation and Satan’s fall the inhabitants of heaven rejoice. As soon as Satan loses some of his authority the inhabitants of heaven begin to sing their songs of thanksgiving and joy. ¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation, and the power, and the royal authority of our God, and the authority of his Christ have come. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, the one who accused them before our God day and night, has been thrown down.’ The inhabitants of heaven know what has happened. They see that a new phase of salvation has come into being. The power and authority of God can be extended over the world more than ever. People all over the world can enter into assurance of salvation.

• A new phase of salvation has come into being

• Two things overcome Satan’s power in the world

(i) the power of Jesus’ blood

(ii) testimony and proclamation of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ – everywhere

Satan can be more easily overcome than in Old Testament times. ¹¹‘And they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of their testimony. And even to the point of death, they had no love for their own lives.’ Two things overcome Satan’s power in this world: (i) the fact that Jesus has died, the power of Jesus’ blood; and (ii) testifying and proclaiming the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ everywhere. As we do so we must be willing to lose our lives, for it is not a message that the world receives easily. Some will come to salvation, but persecution is likely to break out against us. We must be ready to have no love for our lives, even to the point of death. Heaven may rejoice, but there will be *conflict on earth*. ¹²‘Therefore rejoice. O heavens. and you who live in them. Woe for

- Persecution even to the point of death

Satan, having failed to destroy Jesus, persecutes the churches

- Just as in the days of Moses, God removes His people from Satan's realm

- The gospel-age culminating in a final great conflict with Satan

- But God keeps His people safe

- Satan's continued hatred – until Jesus finally destroys him

¹²'Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who live in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil has gone down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a little time.' As he sees his authority being lost Satan is more angry than ever.

Satan, having failed to destroy Jesus, persecutes the churches. ¹³Then when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who had given birth to the male child. Satan sees he has lost much of his authority because of what Jesus has done on the cross and is doing in heaven. Now he hates the church more than ever. But just as in the days of Moses God took Israel away from Pharaoh 'on eagles' wings', so again 'the woman' (the people of God) is entirely removed from the realm of Satan. ¹⁴But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to a place prepared for her in the wilderness. God will care for his people throughout the gospel-age. There she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, out of the reach of the serpent. The 'time, times and half a time' is the gospel-age culminating in a final great conflict with Satan. Sometimes the phrase emphasizes the **end** of the period, but sometimes (as here) it refers to the whole period. ¹⁵Then from his mouth the serpent poured out water like a river pouring down upon the woman, so that he might sweep her away by this river. From its very beginning Satan wished to sweep away the church with a flood of troubles, deceits and persecutions. But God keeps his people safe. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon poured out from its mouth.

Satan continues to hate the church and will go on doing so for the rest of history, until Jesus finally destroys him. ¹⁷Then the dragon became angry with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her children, the people who keep the commandments of God, and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

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