

# THE WORD OF

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# TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

**24**

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## GREAT CONTROVERSY BETWEEN CHRIST AND SATAN

The sin, misery, affliction and devastation we see on this planet, is the second phase of a controversy that erupted in heaven (of all places).

Revelation 12 describes the outbreak of war in heaven and its aftermath transferred to this earth. You and I, the non participants in that war in heaven, have become pawns in the hands of the arch destroyer to afflict the heart of God. But Jesus has BROKEN that hold and we are now free to choose whether we will continue contributing to that rebellion, or enlist

on the side of Christ. To be on Christ's side is to fight against the powers of darkness and become a citizen of His eternal and righteous kingdom.

This lesson will discuss the controversy between Christ and Satan and the vital roll of God's holy people. Christ is working through every soul surrendered to Him and willing to be transformed into His righteous image. Every soul thus transformed will vindicate the name, law and government of God and will be a rebuke to Satan (Zechariah 3:1-8). The great rebel claims that living in harmony with the government and laws of heaven are unreasonable, oppressive and impossible for fallen man to keep; but Jesus proved him wrong and so will every man filled with the Spirit of Christ.

### **1. Where did sin and the rebellion against God's government begin?**

Revelation 12:7

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Note: Michael is Christ -- Daniel 12:1 Michael stands up, obviously after He had been seated... Jesus sits down (later to stand up) (Mark 16:19; Heb.10:12) -- Michael is the Archangel (Jude 9)... The Lord (Jesus) has the voice of the Archangel and shall raise the dead (John 5:25-29; 1Thes.4:16,17). Only God and Christ have the power to raise the dead and give life. Hence Michael is Jesus Christ. It is very likely that "Michael" was Christ's name before His incarnation.

### **2. Who is symbolized by the dragon, the leader of the rebellion?**

Revelation 12:9

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Note: This text should not be implied to mean that Satan is a horrible monster or even a being with a forked tail and horns. This concept of he, who was the covering cherub, is the figment of man's imagination, put there by this fallen angel himself. This human understanding of the Devil suits the designs of the enemy of man, for when men contrive a cartoon image of him they tend to deny his existence and scoff at the idea that there is an evil power to resist.

This gives Satan a decided advantage. As any military strategist will testify -- to overthrow the enemy, let him think he has no cause for alarm, or need for defence, while you surround him, then close the trap and destroy him.

Lucifer, the angel who held the most exalted position in heaven, under Christ, was a most beautiful being, but because of his pride, fell into sin (Ezekiel 28:12-17). Satan will show himself to us as a beautiful being and full of light in a manner calculated to disarm the unwary (2Cor.11:13-15. Review lesson 2).

### **3. Apart from Satan, who else was involved in the revolution against God?**

Revelation 12:4,7 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: One third of the angelic host were persuaded by Lucifer (Satan) that he had a better government to offer than Jesus (Michael). Both Peter and Jude refer to the angels that sinned and of their judgement to come (2Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

### **4. What was Lucifer's ambition and objective in his planned takeover of heaven?**

Isaiah 14:12-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Satan wanted to be God and to receive the worship that was due to God alone.

### **5. Having failed in his assault on the throne of God, Satan was cast out of heaven with his angels. Where were the outcasts placed?**

Revelation 12:9 \_\_\_\_\_

### **6. Now on this earth, what is Satan's attitude toward the inhabitants of the earth and how does God express what He sees is in store for the people of earth?**

Revelation 12:12 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Unable to reach God and Christ in heaven, to where does Satan now direct his wrath and attack?**

Revelation 12:13-17 \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Just as a "dragon" is used to symbolise Satan, so a "woman" is used in Scripture to represent another figure. What does this symbol of a woman represent?**

Jeremiah 6:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Revelation 19:7,8; 2 Corinthians 11:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: While a pure woman represents a holy Church, the true followers of Christ, so a profligate woman represents a corrupt church, those who falsely profess Christ, or deny Him altogether (Rev.17:1-9; Ezekiel 23).

**9. The woman, mentioned in Revelation 12 is a symbol of a church and from the description given it is clearly symbolic language. Summarise the way in which she is represented.**

Revelation 12:1: Clothed with \_\_\_\_\_

Moon \_\_\_\_\_

Crown of \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The Sun of righteousness is Jesus Christ (Mal.4:2) and He makes His glory to rise upon the righteous (Isa.60:1-3). The symbol of the "light of the sun" is to represent a holy character, the character of one living in the fear of the Lord (2Sam.23:3,4). To fear God is to love Him, serve Him, keep His commandments and to walk in His ways (Deut.8:6; 10:12). To be clothed with the Sun of righteousness is to be clothed with the garments of salvation, the righteousness of Christ (Isa.61:10; Rev.19:8; Gal.3:27). The woman clothed with the sun, is therefore, a symbol of the Church of Jesus Christ, His holy people (Ephesians 5:27; 1Peter 2:9).

The woman shown standing on the moon may be seen to represent the people of God standing on the covenant that God has made with them (Psalm 89:34-37; 11:3; Jeremiah 14:20,21; Hebrews 8:10).

The crown with the twelve stars on the head of the woman may be understood to represent the complete body of Christ's believers. The figure twelve has at least two significant applications:--

a) Revelation 7:1-8, God's people are seen to be represented in total by the twelve tribes of Israel (Sons of Jacob, Hebrews 11:9; Exodus 3:6; Genesis 32:24-30; 49:1-27. Notice Dan is disqualified and Joseph's son, Manasseh, replaced him.). As spiritual Israel is the counterpart of national Israel, so spiritual Israel is also seen to be made up of twelve groups, or identities. These groups, bearing the names of the twelve sons of Jacob, are seen to be the names written over the gates into the city of God, New Jerusalem (Rev.21:12). It is through these gates that all of the redeemed host will pass (Rev.22:14).

b) Jesus began His Church with a core of twelve apostles (Matthew 10:2-7). The foundations of the New Jerusalem carry the names of the twelve apostles (Rev.21:14).

Stars are used to represent people or angels. In Revelation 1:20 Christ is portrayed as holding the leaders of the seven Churches (stars) in his right hand (lesson 20 page 2,3). Revelation 9:1 represents Satan, as a star, cast down to the earth (Isaiah 14:12,15; Luke 10:18).

From these descriptions it may be reasonably concluded that the twelve stars in the crown of the woman are a symbol of all of the faithful souls who make up the Church of Jesus Christ.

**10. In persecuting the woman, what is it that Satan now sees as demanding his most urgent attention?**

Revelation 12:4 \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Apart from being caught up to heaven at a specific time, the Child that was born, would one day have a responsibility toward the nations of earth. What is that roll to be?**

Revelation 12:5 \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Who is this Figure that will rule the nations with the rod of iron?**

Revelation 19:11-16 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Further identifying features may be seen in Rev.1:13,14; 3:14. The "Word of God" referred to in Rev.19:13 is described in John 1:1-4,14. It is none other than Jesus Christ.

The "rod of iron" seems to suggest that heaven will be a place governed by a tyrant who rules with a set of laws that would be quite oppressive; but nothing could be further from the truth. In the message to Thyatira, Christ assures that *His people will rule with Him and that they will share His throne* (Rev.2:26-28; 3:21). Psalm chapter 2 gives a little more information concerning the same event. It indicates that the wicked receive the judgement from the rod of iron, while the righteous are under the protecting care of Jesus.

The sword with which the nations are smitten and the rod that breaks them in pieces are doing the same work, the work of judging. It is the "Word of God" that pierces the soul to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12; John 12:47,48; Isa.11:4). When the judgement is completed, the wicked will be totally confounded and left guilty; they will have rejected, once too often, the merciful pleadings of a loving God. Then they will face the final destruction.

Heaven will not be oppressive (Rev.21:1-7; Isa.11:1-9), every soul that is finally redeemed into the kingdom of God will rejoice and love the law of God, for it became their way of life while in this present world (Psalm 119:1-3,14,165-168) they will feel perfectly at ease and feel that they have a right to be there. Their thoughts will be holy and will

be in harmony with all other inhabitants of the creation of God. They will also be in harmony with the mind of Christ (1Cor.2:16; Philip.2:5).

## THE ATTACK ON GOD'S CHURCH

Shortly after Jesus was born the devil made an attempt to destroy Him, as described in Rev.12:4. This is the incident where Herod commissioned his soldiers to kill all the baby boys, two years old and under, in Bethlehem and surrounding regions. The heavenly Father protected His infant Son by placing Him out of reach of the devil's human agents (Matt.2:13-23).

Forty days after the resurrection of Jesus, His mission on earth completed, He ascended up to His Father in heaven, never to be touched by Satan again (Mark 16:19). His work now is to minister for every repentant soul before the mercy seat and direct His Church through persecution and oppression, for she has become the object of the fury of the Dragon.

### 13. What instrument did Satan use in his efforts to overthrow God's Church?

Revelation 12:15

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Note: "Water" is a Bible symbol, used to represent people (Rev.17:15). Conversely, land, or earth (opposite to water), would therefore represent an area that is sparsely populated. This understanding is supported by Christ's statement that the woman fled into the wilderness, or place of seclusion (Rev.12:6,14). The Greek word translated "wilderness" is EREMOS and means: *desolate, wilderness, solitary, or desert.*

Another application of this symbol, where water represents heavily populated areas and earth represents a land having very few people, may be seen in Revelation 13:1,11; 17:1,15. From this description in Revelation 12:15 it may be determined that Satan uses many people in his drive to obliterate every last follower of the King to whom he lost the battle in heaven.

Another consideration for the water that comes out of the mouth of the serpent (dragon, devil) to engulf God's church is that water may also represent doctrine. The word of God is represented in the Bible as water (Ephesians 5:26,27; Ezekiel 36:25-27). Washing of water by the word. Washing of regeneration. Need of the Holy Spirit to make the word effective (John 3:5; Titus 3:5). Being made clean, or pure, by obeying the truth (1Peter 1:22,23). As God's water, His word, sanctifies (John 17:17), then Satan's word, the wine of corrupt doctrine (Rev.17:1,2), leads the unwatchful servants into deception and ruin (2Thessalonians 2:8-12).

**14. How did the Lord deliver His people in the face of this flood of human opposition and intense persecution?**

Revelation 12:6,14,16 \_\_\_\_\_

Compare: Isaiah 33:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Note; This will also be the defence of God's faithful people against the flood of human opposition in the time of the great persecution just preceding the second coming of Jesus.

Notwithstanding that God's people have suffered persecution in varying degrees from the time of Abel to the present (Gen.4:3-8; Isa.59:15; 2Tim.3:12), it is significant that this text should focus on a specific time period when referring to the satanic fury of the Dragon, a fury directed toward God's faithful people some time after the ascension of Jesus.

You will recall from our study in lesson 10 concerning 1260 years of persecution of God's people by the papacy, that this prophecy in Revelation 12 indicates that the power behind the human agents in that atrocity and genocide was Satan. Compare Revelation 13:1-8.

**15. When the earth opened up to protect God's Church, Satan became infuriated at the frustration of his plans. Though many martyrs fell, God preserved the seed of His faithful people --- the keepers of the**



**flame of truth. Describe Satan's (dragon) attitude at this time and indicate the term used to specify God's faithful and obedient people.**  
 Revelation 12:17a \_\_\_\_\_

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Note: What is meant by the "remnant" of God's people? ---  
 The remnant of anything is the last piece. Here is described the last of the faithful adherents to the truth of the Bible. While it is true that the Devil has a particular hatred for the followers of Christ as this world nears its end and he intensifies his efforts to destroy them, it has ever been his purpose to cause the destruction of the people of God since he was first cast into the earth. The term "remnant" may therefore be applied to mean other than the last of God's Church at the end of time, as God has had a remnant people right from the beginning ! So then, how are the *remnant* identified?

**16. What characteristics of God's people identify them as the remnant?**

Revelation 12:17b, compare Revelation 14:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zephaniah 3:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Isaiah 10:20-22 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The remnant of the Church of God are those dedicated people from all churches who have turned completely to the Lord. They have escaped from the deception of teachings that are at variance with the Word of God (Isa.4:2,3). As false doctrine has been a ploy of Satan since man was in Eden, God's remnant have always stood apart from a religious teaching that God says has "fallen". This will be particularly true for those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus as we approach the end of time (Rev. 14:6-14, and lesson 19, Q.9).

We may now see that Satan's fury against the people of God in the last days is directed toward those who are not caught up in the lies of Babylon and therefore do not receive the "mark of the beast," the

last great effort of Satan to enlist, or force, the conscience of every human being on this planet (Rev.13:11-18).

**17. The remnant of God's Church are said to have the "testimony of Jesus Christ". What is the testimony of Jesus Christ?**

Revelation 19:10 \_\_\_\_\_

**18. What then, is the "spirit of prophecy"?**

1 Corinthians 14:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Compare: Numbers 11:24-29 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The Greek word PROPHETEUS means to prophecy -- speak under inspiration, to predict future events pertaining to the kingdom of God, also, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, to teach, refute, reprove, admonish and comfort others. Essentially, to "prophecy" is to tell others the TRUTH about salvation and the kingdom of God and do all things needful to lead others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (e.g. 1Cor.14:23-25). Do not be confused, teaching others the wine of false doctrine is NOT regarded as prophesying in the sacred context of Scripture !

When God told His people that they were to prophecy yet again (Rev.10:11) they become the express object of Satan's attack. It was Satan's design to thwart the purpose of God and God's purpose was to take the last warning message of salvation into a world that had nigh forgotten Him.

They were to prophecy of the soon return of Jesus. With the three angels message they were to warn the world of the errors of Satan's deceptions and the result of following those deceptions. Every man was to get ready, for soon probation will be forever closed (Luke 12:35-48; 13:25-28; Genesis 6:3, review lessons 18 and 19).

**19. How do the followers of Christ gain the victory over the Devil?**

Revelation 12:11 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The word of their testimony is the character of Jesus Christ formed within the heart and reflecting outwardly to testify of the righteousness of the indwelling Christ. Every man shall see it (2Cor.3:2,3; Eze.36:23; Matt.5:16; Col.1:26,27).

## 20. Who is fighting a losing battle?

John 12:31; Hebrews 2:14 \_\_\_\_\_

The end of the controversy between Christ and Satan will see Satan destroyed, sin fully eradicated and Jesus and His faithful people established in His eternal kingdom. But before that glorious day, sin must first be allowed to run its full course, that all of creation may witness the lies and devastation of Satan and the character, justice and government of God fully vindicated; for it was the lies of Lucifer that seduced away one third of the heavenly angels and reeked sin upon an infant planet.

The prophecies dealing with the time between now and the end should be understood, that we may read the signs and be prepared for the events that lie ahead. If we trust in the saving power of Jesus we need not fear, for He has promised to deliver every faithful and honest soul, through the greatest crisis, into His eternal kingdom of peace.

In the following lesson we shall learn more of how the Destroyer of souls works through men to achieve his ends, that you and I may know how to enlist on the winning side. Subsequent lessons will reveal the area of Satan's most pointed attack --- The law of God... He shall think to change times and laws! (Dan.7:25).

**Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. 2Corinthians 2:11**

