

Charts: The Third Parenthetical Visions: Chart #15, and Tracking Satan: Chart #16

PREFACE

Read Revelation 12:7-9.

I would be doing this class a great disservice if, at this point in our study, I simply began an examination of v7 and the “war in heaven” without first offering some clarifying background. In the text just read we learn that the victor of this war in heaven will eject the loser and his army—Satan, and his angels—from heaven: “... there was no longer a place found for them in heaven” (v8).

Perhaps you, like me, read this and think, *Wait a minute, hasn't Satan been kicked out of heaven (“fallen”) before—even in this study alone? Didn't I, in Session 21, identify him as the likeliest candidate for the “star from heaven which had fallen to the earth” in 9:1? Now he is falling again?*

The fast answer to that is, yes, he is indeed falling again. But that answer is, of course, insufficient. We need to back up and make a thumbnail sketch of the career of “the great dragon,” “the serpent of old,” AKA, “the devil and Satan” (v9). [Turn please to Job 38.](#)

At the beginning of His energetic response to Job and his self-serving friends, Yahweh describes the scene in heaven at Creation.

Read Job 38:4-7.

We glean two pieces of information from this passage:

1. Here and throughout the OT a common way to refer to angels is “the sons of God.”
2. Though they are created beings, angels were apparently created *prior to* the creation of the earth and universe, for they witnessed it and “sang together” and “shouted for joy.”

Now let's get a little closer to that Creation account. [Turn to Genesis 1.](#)

Read Genesis 1:31-2:1.

At this point everything has been created: angels, the universe, and the earth, including man. And God declares it all “very good.” This would, of course, include the angel Satan and any of his fellow angels that will later side with him. But are we assuming too much? [Turn please to Ezekiel 28.](#)

There are two passages in the OT that give us details on the pre-fall Satan, as well as his subsequent descent. This in Ezekiel is an example of a “now—not yet” prophecy, speaking on the one hand of the king of Tyre—as does Isaiah of the king of Babylon—but including descriptions that could not possibly refer to a human being on earth. After declaring his physical beauty, v14 offers more pertinent information.

“You were the anointed cherub who covers,
And I placed you there.
You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.
You were blameless in your ways
From the day you were created
Until unrighteousness was found in you.” (Ezekiel 28:14–15)

Here we learn that

1. Satan was not just “good,” he was special—probably an archangel, for he “covered” (i.e., guarded, protected) the throne of God.
2. He was created “blameless”—until, one day, he wasn’t.

“By the abundance of your trade
You were internally filled with violence,
And you sinned;
Therefore I have cast you as profane
From the mountain of God.
And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub,
From the midst of the stones of fire.” (Ezekiel 28:16)

Satan is cast from “the mountain of God,” but *to* where? The answer to that is a little involved. On the one hand, he was sent to earth:

“...I cast you to the ground;
I put you before kings,
That they may see you.” (v17b)

In a moment we will see that he was also sent somewhere else, but before we leave this passage, note that it includes a description of his final demise in v19:

“All who know you among the peoples
Are appalled at you;
You have become terrified
And you will cease to be forever.”

Ezekiel speaks of Satan being sent to the earth. Isaiah offers another detail. [Please turn to Isaiah 14.](#)

Here is another “now—not yet” prophecy, pertaining first to the king of Babylon, but also to Satan. And Isaiah reiterates that when he fell he was sent to earth.

Read Isaiah 14:12-15.

Here we see that this “shining one, son of the dawn” is “cut down to the earth” and “will be thrust down to Sheol,” which is essentially a subterranean holding place.

The first question to answer is, *When did this occur? When did Satan first “fall”?* The evidence clearly shows, in Genesis, that it had to occur somewhere between Genesis 1:31, when everything in Creation was declared by God to be “very good,” and Genesis 3:1, when the serpent (Satan’s representative in the garden) is actively working to corrupt God’s “very good” Creation. Ever since that initial fall, Satan has been busy on earth doing his worst against God and His people. Yet, at the same time, even though he “fell,” Satan has retained access to heaven—even the courts of the throne of God! How do we know this? [Let’s return to the book of Job, this time Chapter One.](#)

Read Job 1:6-7.

Let’s stop there for now. What do we learn from these verses?

1. There again is that phrase “sons of God,” (angels) and “Satan also came among them.” So though he was demoted and cast down to the earth, and even Sheol, Satan has retained access to the third heaven and even the throne room of God.
2. Yahweh as much says, *Hey, Satan, what have you been up to?* To which Satan replies that he has been roaming about the earth. Thus, even though he was sent to Sheol, he has access to the earth, and even though he was sent to the earth, he has access to the third heaven.

Yahweh then, in v12, grants permission for Satan to confound the life of Job—with restrictions: “Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.’ So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.”

This sets forth an important precept. Just as He does with humans, the Lord God grants a measure of free will to the adversary—yet He, the Lord God, retains ultimate control.

This remains the status of Satan to this day; it will remain his status until somewhere around the beginning or middle of the Tribulation. So far Satan has “fallen” only once. If we are correct that the “star” of Revelation 9:1 is Satan, it clearly states that it “had fallen to earth” (past tense). When Jesus said that He “was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning” (Luke 10:18), it again was stated in the past tense (yet could also be *proleptic (or prophetic) aorist*, referring to this second fall). And since that fall, Satan has been prowling “around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

One more thing before we examine our passage in Chapter Twelve: *Who is this angel Michael, who goes to war against Satan?*

Michael is an archangel of God, one of the “chief princes,” whose assignment seems to be one of protecting, even going to battle for Israel. He is invariably portrayed in Scripture “as the defender of God’s people against satanic destruction” (MacArthur). In Daniel 10 the prophet records a visitation from an encouraging angel in answer to Daniel’s prayers, who states in v13 that “the prince of the kingdom of Persia [i.e., a demonic angel] was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.” Later in the chapter the critical help from Michael is again emphasized.

Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.” (Daniel 10:20–21)

Recorded in Jude is another instance of Michael being sent to do battle with Satan—this time for the body of Moses.

But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” (Jude 9)

Thus it follows that in our text in Chapter Twelve, [which we will turn to now](#), Michael is the one leading the army of holy angels against Satan and his evil angels.

v7

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

MacArthur points out that the grammatical structure of this verse in the Greek indicates that Satan will initiate this supernatural, heavenly war. There has been a measure of conflict in heaven (just as on earth) between good and evil since the archangel Satan fell in the first place. But he knows that his time is running out; there are just so many opportunities left for him to do battle with God before his time is up.

It was shown to the prophet Daniel that Michael would engage in this war at this time.

Read Daniel 12:1.

So we can look at this as the first of his final three battles waged against God and His armies (the last two are recorded in Revelation 16:13 to 19:21, and 20:7-10).

Little can be said about the nature or duration of this war, its weaponry, or its tactics. All we can do is shudder at the thought of such a cosmic collision between vast armies of *holy* angels meeting in combat vast armies of *evil* angels. All the clues to this (such as Daniel 12:1) point to it occurring around (perhaps shortly before) the mid-point of the Tribulation, for its conclusion and consequences supply a perfect explanation for the level of evil and depravity and misery that will attend the Great Tribulation.

This is where MacArthur places this war and Satan's subsequent fall to earth; that is, he sees this occurring roughly at the point where it is being described; Walvoord, however, places it considerably earlier:

Though the events of this chapter deal in general with the end of the age, it is clear that they do not come chronologically after the seventh trumpet. Rather, the fall of Satan may be predated to the time of the seals in chapter 6, or even before the first seal. His fall begins the great tribulation.

Personally I straddle the fence on this; I lean toward a later placement, but can imagine it either way. If Satan is cast out of heaven earlier in the Tribulation, then his initial activities are to establish the career of his primary servant, Antichrist, organizing his campaign for world domination in the name of his master. If, however, Satan is cast out closer to the mid-Tribulation, then his rage after defeat and banishment go a long way to explaining the demonic virulence of the last three and one half years of the period.

One difference between these two positions does raise an interesting thought: MacArthur claims that Satan and his excommunicated angels

will join the innumerable demons already roaming the earth, the lately arrived demons belched forth from the abyss (9:1-3), and two hundred million other formerly bound demons (9:13-16) to create an unimaginable holocaust of evil.

But if Walvoord is correct with an earlier placement of the war and fall, then the released demons described in Chapter Nine may very well *be* the ones previously fallen with Satan.

Aside from Satan's evilness and opposition to the holy things of God and His Christ in general, could there be a specific reason for this war? What does he hope to gain? Does he have an immediate goal? He certainly has a history of doing whatever he can to stymie the advance of Christianity, as well as the safe return of Israel to their homeland. In the prophecy of Zechariah, written around the time of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem by the returning remnant—that is, the reestablishment of Jerusalem as a place of worship of Yahweh—he is shown a vision of the high priest standing before “the angel of the Lord.”

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. (Zechariah 3:1)

Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor are working to resettle Jerusalem, while Satan, stands before the pre-incarnate Christ to speak against Joshua.

In the context of Revelation 12, what big event is fast approaching? The establishment of the world-wide kingdom of Christ for one thousand years. From Satan's perspective, it would be quite a coup to start a war in heaven that just might prevent that kingdom.

v8

and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

Verse 8 continues and completes the last sentence in v7. It doesn't just say that Satan and his army lost the war; no, the report speaks to the inherent failings of these sad combatants—the ones who initiated the conflict in the first place! “They”—the dragon and his angels—“were not strong enough.” Of course not; if this dragon cannot win out over a woman in the throes of childbirth and a newborn child (vv4-6), what made him think he could be victorious over the armies of righteousness led by archangel Michael?

...and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

If this were not speaking of Satan and his minions it would be a more melancholic statement. It leaves one wondering how God will be feeling at this moment; after all, Satan was once one of the “sons of God,” an archangel, the cherub who covered the very throne of God. Even after he was demoted, when he fell the first time, there remained a place for him in heaven. He could come and go at will, had speaking rights to Father God. But now he and his angels will be forever banned from the third heaven. One wonders if there just might be a tinge of sadness in God over this.

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

This verse not only describes what happened to the great dragon and his angels after they lost the war, but it condenses a veritable catalog of the character and practices of this once great angel.

- **“the great dragon”** The dragon with his “seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads...seven diadems” represents the satanic power structure that is in place during the Tribulation.

- **“the serpent of old”** points back to the Garden of Eden, emphasizing his treachery and subtlety, and the tragic event that triggered the fall of man and has culminated in the necessary tragedy of the Tribulation, the wrath of God against sin, and the resulting judgments.

- **“the devil”** The Greek *diabolos* (devil) means “slanderer, defamer, false accuser,” which is how he is described in the next verse: “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, *for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night*’” (v10; emphasis added).

- **Satan** is a Hebrew word meaning “adversary.”

And the great dragon was thrown down,

The word translated “thrown down” in the NASB is the Greek *eblethe*, which means to throw (as in throwing a spear or missile), hurl, or thrust. The tense of the verb means to cast down for good and all.

David Guzik points out that this is actually the second of *four* “falls” of Satan:

1. From glorified to profane ([Ezekiel 28:14-16](#))
2. From having access to heaven ([Job 1:12](#), [1Kings 22:21](#), [Zechariah 3:1](#)) to restriction to the earth ([Revelation 12](#))
3. From the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years ([Revelation 20](#))
4. From the pit to the lake of fire ([Revelation 20](#))

he was thrown down to the earth,

Though this second “fall”—this expulsion from heaven—is clearly, from his perspective, a humiliating defeat for Satan, note that there is no mention of any loss of his supernatural powers.

Thus Satan brings with him to this earth every bit of his demonic capabilities. This victory, this cleansing that occurs in heaven means just the opposite for the earth. Imagine, for the first time in all history, Satan's full measure of evil—exacerbated by his rage from being so soundly defeated by the holy angels—will be poured out onto this globe. There will be nothing to bridle it, nothing to counteract it.

...and his angels were thrown down with him.

Humanly speaking it will be his team running the show; Antichrist, the world dictator, will be in charge, with his evil genius, his P.R. man, the false prophet, using supernatural means to make his boss appear even greater, more super-human, even god-like, than ever before. In addition, all—millions—of Satan's demonic angels will be spewed out onto the earth, unrestricted, unrestrained, in the form of ravenous locusts, demonic horses from hell, and who knows what else.

There will be no universal presence of the Holy Spirit, as before the Rapture, to temper the evil effects of Satan, no world-wide church empowered by that same Spirit to stand in opposition to him.

Satan will be in charge.

AN AFTERTHOUGHT

In closing I would like to leave you with some food for thought. In this and earlier sessions we have learned of Satan's almost constant presence before the throne of God, slandering, falsely accusing the righteous. There are too many references to this to slough it off as mere opinion. And it would seem that his many evil angels are with him there as well.

Yet this teacher—in this and other classes, especially during our study of the Thessalonian letters—has often expressed the point that the resurrection of believers is necessary to give us glorified bodies suitable for the presence of God, *for He cannot abide sinful flesh in His presence.*

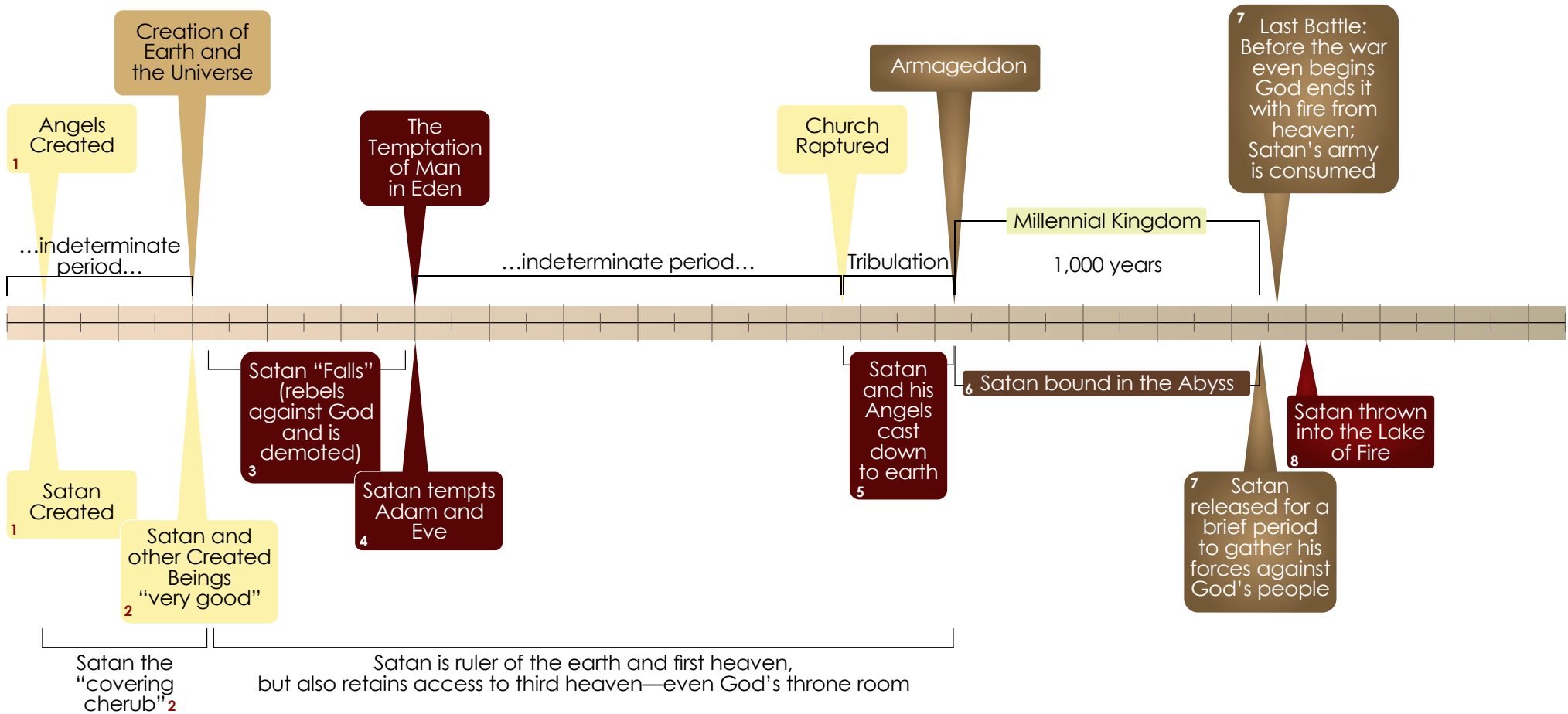
Well, which is it?

One cannot get more sinful than Satan—yet there he is standing before God and His Christ in heaven. We haven't the time to work this out now, but I will be working on this to bring my own answer. Perhaps you might join me in pondering this on your own, searching through God's word to glean an answer—or the critical difference between the two which may have escaped us.

The question for which we need an answer: *If God cannot permit sinful, unglorified believers in His presence, how then can He abide Satan and his angels? What are we missing?*

TRACKING SATAN

The Rise and Fall of The Dragon



Footnotes

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|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| 1
Job 38:4-7
Genesis 2:1 | 2
Genesis 1:31
Ezekiel 28:14-15 | 3
Ezekiel 28:16-17
Isaiah 14:12-15 | 4
Genesis 3:1-19 | 5
Revelation 12:7-9 | 6
Revelation 20:1-3 | 7
Revelation 20:7-9
Ezekiel 39:1-8 | 8
Revelation 20:10
Matthew 25:41 |
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