

A Journey with Christ Through the Future

Satan's Role in the End Times

Revelation 12:7-12

INTRODUCTION:

Two weeks ago we **completed** a series where we looked at the biblical proof that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah of the Old Testament. Now we are continuing this journey by examining the events and prophecies concerning the return of Christ that I have entitled ***A Journey with Christ Through the Future***.

There are many events in the end times to talk about. So the question arises "Where do we begin?"

ILLUSTRATION:

I am sure that all of you remember the Wizard of Oz movie. There was conversation between Glinda (the Witch of the North) and Dorothy in Munchkin land when Glinda was telling her about the Wizard of Oz. Their conversation went like this:

Dorothy: But - how do I start for the Emerald City?

Glinda: **It's always best to start at the beginning** - and all you do is follow the Yellow Brick Road.

Dorothy: But - what happens if I -

Glinda: Just follow the Yellow Brick Road.

I am going to take the advice of Glinda. "It's always best to start at the beginning - and all you do is follow the Yellow Brick Road".

Just follow the Yellow Brick Road! That shouldn't be too difficult, should it? Dorothy just had to start at the first row of bricks and follow the yellow brick road to Emerald City. But, as you know, she met many obstacles along the way including a fork in the road at the scarecrow's field. She chose the middle road and made it to the Wizard. Would the other two roads have got her there as well? Using a phrase that I will use frequently through this series "**I DON'T KNOW!**"

So if we take Glinda's advice to start at the beginning, where **would** we start? There is no yellow brick road in the Bible.

One of the most difficult things to do with the end times is to put them in chronological order. Most notably because the book of Revelation is not written in chronological order

as we are accustomed to. As westerners we are used to linear thought. Point A moves to point B then to point C, to D, and on and on until we have completed the story. We tell our stories starting with the first event and progress through time to the end.

So why didn't John write Revelation in chronological order? Why didn't he write it so everyone could get it. Well, he did. The problem is John was not a westerner. He was a Jew and Jews do not think linearly like we do. They think cyclically. They think in circles. Let me explain. There is a very common Jewish practice that is called a Chiasm (Key'-as-um). You find it in their literature. Their main point will be point D. What they will do is start at point A, then point B, then point C, then they will finally get to their main point: point D. But that is only at the middle of the message. Then they will talk about point D from a different angle with point C and then go to point B from a different angle, and finish with point A from a different angle. The long word for this is **recapitulation** (Re ka pit' u lay shun). That is where our word **recap** comes from. It is an abbreviation for recapitulation.

ILLUSTRATION:

When we recap a baseball game we first view or hear the actual game, we experience all of the plays that occur in detail and learn who wins, and then we will recap the game by reviewing or showing highlights of what we have just seen. These recaps will generally explain why the game was won or lost. It will summarize the game from a different perspective.

This is very similar to how the book of Revelation and the Bible as a whole is written. We will go into this with more detail and examples in future sermons, but I bring up cyclical thinking now for the purpose of explaining the difficulty of putting end time events into chronological order.

As we go through the end time events there will be a lot of Bible teaching but the goal will be to apply those teachings and preach from it as well. I firmly believe that as we look at these events based upon the scriptures, that it will change our perspective on the world around us.

Now I go back to my original question. Since the Bible does not have a yellow brick road laying everything out in chronological order, especially Revelation concerning the end times, where do we start?

Well, if we want to start at the very beginning where the necessity of the end times began, we would have to **start** with the **Fall of Satan and examine his role from the time of his fall through the end times.**

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 12:7-12 (NASB)

⁷ And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, ⁸ and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. ¹² For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time.”

Prayer

The scriptures reveal things to us that we could not possibly know on our own. Because of God's Word, we can get a glimpse of what has, is, and will happen in a spiritual world that our physical world is not even aware of. We will learn that Satan exists and how we can escape his snares.

BODY:

I. THE FALL OF SATAN.

By the scriptures, we know that God created all things through Jesus.

John 1:1-3 (NASB)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

These created beings are categorized as either:

Beings from the "Natural" world or beings from the "Spirit" world. The first creatures that God created to inhabit His kingdom were an order of intelligent spirit beings called angels.

God had created all spirit beings as good, but with a will to choose. One of the beings among the Spirit World that God created was Lucifer.

This was an awesome creature that was perfect in all his ways from the day he was created. While the following passage refers specifically to the king of Tyre, it also obviously references the spiritual power behind that king, namely, Satan.

Ezekiel 28:12b-13a, 15 (NASB)

¹²... “You had the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
¹³ “You were in Eden, the garden of God;
Every precious stone was your covering:...

¹⁵ “You were blameless in your ways
From the day you were created
Until unrighteousness was found in you.

Lucifer had a lot going for him.

- He was pleasing to look upon because of his beauty.

- He dressed with splendid personal adornments.
- He was an intelligent creature and full of wisdom.

Satan's fall from heaven is described here. This passage describes why Satan fell, but they do not specifically say when the fall occurred. What we do know is that Satan fell before he tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden. Satan's fall, therefore, must have occurred somewhere after the time the angels were created and before he tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Whether that time span was a single day or millions of years, we are not told.

Why did Satan fall from heaven? Satan fell because of pride and unrighteousness. He desired to be God, not to be a servant of God. Notice the many "**I will**" statements in

Isaiah 14:12-15 (NASB)

¹² "How you have fallen from heaven,
O star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
You who have weakened the nations!
¹³ "But you said in your heart,
I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And **I will** sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.
¹⁴ **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.'
¹⁵ "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,
To the recesses of the pit.

As we read in this passage, a fall is not an accurate description. It would be far more accurate to say God cast Satan out of heaven. Satan desired to kick God off His throne and take over the rule of the universe. Satan wanted to be God. Interestingly enough, that is essentially what Satan tempted Adam and Eve with in the Garden of Eden that they could be like God.

II. OUR WAR WITH SATAN.

Satan is not going to come to us in a red suit, horns on his head, and a pointed tail as we see him in pictures and say, "You know what? I am Lucifer. I am Satan, and I am going to take you straight to hell with me." Instead, Satan is going to allure us with worldly things and try to justify them with twisted scripture if necessary. He is the great deceiver!

ILLUSTRATION:

In the February 26, 1974 edition of Insight a story is told of Major William Martin, a British subject who was buried near Huelva on the southern coast of Spain. Martin never knew the great contribution he made to the Allied success in the Second World War, especially in Sicily, because he died of pneumonia in the foggy dampness of England before he ever saw the battle front. The Allies had invaded North Africa. The next logical step was Sicily.

Knowing the Germans calculated this, the Allies determined to outfox them. One dark night, an Allied submarine came to the surface just off the coast of Spain and put

Martin's body out to sea in a rubber raft with an oar. In his pocket were secret documents indicating the Allied forces would strike next in Greece and Sardinia.

Major Martin's body washed ashore, and Axis intelligence operatives soon found him, thinking he had crashed at sea. They passed the secret documents through Axis hands all the way to Hitler's headquarters. So while Allied forces moved toward Sicily, thousands and thousands of German troops moved on to Greece and Sardinia--where there was no battle.

The scriptures reveal to us that we are at war with Satan. Satan works with much more cunning than even the Allied plan. Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has continued to deceive men. He uses all kinds of devices to deceive the Christian and destroy the lost person. Conventional weapons cannot hurt him. He is in the spiritual world. As humans we have no idea how to defeat a spiritual foe. That is why God left us with His Word. To provide us with spiritual knowledge by which we can win against our Spiritual foe.

Our military has a division called "intelligence". Its main emphasis is on getting to know the enemy. It would be very difficult for us to fight if we don't know anything about the deceptions and devices of our enemy. We live in a very dangerous world. It is more dangerous than we might even imagine. Of course, one can think of the danger we hear of on the news or read in the papers. But there is more danger than just what people see in the world around us. Biological warfare, threats, terrorists' attacks, and bombings are all dangerous. Economic failure would be disastrous. Yet, these dangers pale in comparison to the spiritual foes that oppose the Christian.

Ephesians 6:12 (NASB)

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

In other words you and I face danger every day whether we visibly see it or not. It is that old evil foe Satan himself. Scripture points out this evident danger.

1 Peter 5:8-9a (NASB)

⁸ Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But resist him, firm in *your faith*,...

Satan wishes to devour the soul of everyone that he meets. Satan is constantly working behind the scenes, using his devices to influence the way people think: their attitudes and ideas. He has contaminated this world with his way of thinking. So God tells us how to fight against Satan.

1 John 2:15-17 (NASB)

¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *also its lusts*; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

There is a defense against the evil foe. As we just read in I Peter, we must "Resist him, standing firm in the faith". This is why it is so important that we know the Word of God. From it we know "the things of the world" that must be avoided and we know what the

will of God is that we must live by. We are promised that if we do the will of God in our lives we will be able to escape the snares of Satan and be with God in Heaven for eternity!

I would like to reread verse 11 from our scripture reading this morning.

Revelation 12:11 (NASB)

¹¹ And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

Jesus tells us through John that the only way to overcome Satan, the only way to counter his attacks, is by the "blood of the Lamb". There is no other way. We must be washed in His blood!

It continues with a second characteristic of the Christian who will overcome Satan... "By the word of their testimony". When we have been saved by the blood of the Lamb, we must do spiritual battle against Satan for the souls of men. We become a light to the world. They can see God through us and we share the Gospel to the world around us.

And then there is a third characteristic of the Christian who will overcome Satan... "they did not love their life even to death". If we were in a country where Christians are being persecuted, this verse would be a little more powerful. Because there are countries in this world where the testimony of Jesus means eventual execution. To make a public stand for Jesus, to wear a cross on your lapel, to carry a Bible in public, means almost certain death in some countries. "They did not love their life even to death".

Some Christians will literally die for Christ. "They did not love their life even to death" But I want you to understand that this can take on a spiritual meaning as well.

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

When we die to ourselves we achieve an ultimate victory over sin. An ultimate Victory over Satan. The accuser is thwarted when your walk with the Lord. This only comes when you die to self. It only comes when you allow whatever is controlling your life to experience death.

I realize that many of us will not experience a physical martyrdom for our faith. But we **all** must experience a spiritual death to sin and self.

Who likes to experience death? None of us. Because it hurts. It is not fun. "They did not love their life even to death".

III. THE FINAL DEMISE OF SATAN.

We truly want to be on the side of Christ and have our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life when He returns. In Revelation chapter 20 we learn of the final demise of Satan and his followers after their time of tribulation on the earth.

Revelation 20:1-3, 7-15 (NASB)

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

⁷ When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. ⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

CONCLUSION:

This morning I ask you. Have you escaped the snares of Satan and died to self? Are you confident that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

If you are not prepared you too can take Glinda's advice from the Wizard of Oz. **It's always best to start at the beginning.** Surrender your life to Christ and be washed in the blood of the Lamb!

He is Lord!