

Chapter 6

The Rogue Empire

Revelation chapter 10 sets up a new period of end-times prophecies. This will be the second half of the 70th week of Daniel – the “Messiah week.” There are no plagues described in this chapter, but John is exposed to information he is forbidden to write.

10:4 And when the seven thunders uttered *their* voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

There are times when God speaks clearly, but not to everyone. The parables were like that. Jesus explained them to his disciples, but others who heard were left in darkness. In John 12:28-29 when God speaks from heaven, John records the actual words, while others perceived the sound as the language of some angel. Still others heard only thunder. Thunder is sometimes used to deliver a message to selected ears. Daniel had a similar privilege and restriction in Dan.12:4, as well as the apostle Paul in 2Cor.12:3-4. So even part of this prophecy will not become generally known until a later time.

10:7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached [the gospel] to His servants the prophets.

Read Rev.10:7 very carefully! Notice that days (time) is involved before this seventh angel sounds his trumpet. The mystery of God (per Daniel chapter 9) will be finished before the sounding of this seventh and final trumpet. This would terminate the period of the final 3-1/2 years. Any later references to 3-1/2 years in Revelation, would have to be repeats of that which happens before this trumpet is sounded. For instance: The 3-1/2 years mentioned in chapter 12 would be an overlay of the 3-1/2 year period described in chapter 11 – before the last trumpet that is mentioned in 2 Corinthians 15. But chapter 12 will bring out more details of this period.

10:10 I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. 11 And they *said to me, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.”

John has finished one prophetic assignment given in chapter 1, and is now being given an additional assignment. Notice that the scope of the prophecies to follow will transcend the world’s races, geography, cultures, and rulers.

Please bear with the following dramatized synopsis of Revelation chapters 12 and 13 to set the stage for what happens next:

Dramatized synopsis of Revelation 12-13

Thousands of years before, a wily dragon had conned Adam and Eve out of the authority of earthly affairs, and had been occupying the rulership of earth ever since. Even Jesus had referred to him as “the god of this world.” But now, awhile after the opening of the second seal and the catastrophes that followed, the powers of the spiritual realm had been shaken and Satan’s contract had been terminated.

A massive swirl of dust surrounded the huge creature as he landed as a chaotic heap upon planet Earth. This was followed by a torrent of other thuds and splats that became an avalanche of boisterous voices and confusion as his flailing companions obliterated the surrounding landscape.

After a hard-fought battle the red dragon and his followers had been kicked out of a position of rulership in which they had squatted for thousands of years. The authority Satan had conned out of Eve and manipulated out of Adam, had now been reclaimed by their heirs. That dragon of old was once again only a creature – but a powerful one.

The earth had become scarcely recognizable since the last time he had lived there. It had been washed by a massive flood, inhabited by billions of humans, and then pummeled by a sequence of disasters – both natural and supernatural. Between them they had obliterated half of the human race. But now the smoking wreckage of what was left, along with its terrified humans, were all he had to work with – along with his disillusioned horde of freshly fallen angels.

That woman! That bride of Jesus and her kids! I almost caught the last one, but he was suddenly pulled out of my reach into the very throne room of God. By incredible luck, very few of her children were killed by the plagues. I'll have to aim more carefully next time. And now they are all bragging about how God spared them from this and that – while those smart enough to worship me were being killed by the millions. I tried to tell God how evil her children were, but he just said that their wickedness had all been paid for by what I had done to Jesus. I should have thought of that and been more careful. And then they sicked all those angels on us – no fair; it was two against one!

OK, so there she is! They are only humans, and they won't stand a chance against me and my angels in this realm. Well don't just stand there. Find a flood of humans to inhabit and go after her. We all know where she is, and she thinks she can get away from me.

Like the pigs suddenly filled with demons, and like Pharaoh and his warriors filled with fury they charged – only to be swallowed alive by the the very earth itself. A few baffled buzzards silently soared in the gentle breeze above, wondering how so great a feast could have disappeared into the earth so suddenly.

The dragon whirled around and saw him; he wasn't bowing down to him – he wasn't even afraid of him. Some of the woman's kids are still here! (At least five of them are virgins who didn't care enough to bring extra oil.) OK, so they were the lazy ones who did not take God's words seriously. Yes they believed. They knew they were not perfect, and they had asked God for forgiveness. But then they had gone on about their lives in pursuit of their own interests.

Well now it's payday, and I will kill them all. But how could he find them, since they look and behave just like his own kids – except that they are not afraid of him? King Nebuchadnezzar knew how to find them. He built a statue and required all humanity to worship it. All right then; round up what's left of the artists, I have a statue for them to build. Those who are willing to worship it will receive labels upon their bodies that will forever declares their loyalty to me. Immediately kill those who will not receive this implant – before they have a chance to tell others about what I did to Jesus, and what Jesus did for them.

Chapter 11

Here we are entering a new era. The age of God-ordained empires has come to a close, and now the instigator of all corruption within those empires has himself been dumped out of spiritual authority into the leftovers of the mess he has created.

The previous five global empires had been ordained by God, so at least some honor was due them. This remaining global power to arise is driven by Satan, and those who willingly serve it will be damned.

The rules are different, because in chapter 12 we will see that the authority over the earth itself will be restored to the saints. This was the original commission given to Adam. Consider Romans 8:19-22 to help picture this.

8:19 For the eagerly awaiting creation waits for the revealing of the sons *and daughters* of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it*, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

The narrative describing this new era begins with John being given a prophetic tool – déjà vu Moses and his staff.

11:1-2 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 Leave out (literally throw out) the court which is outside the temple (sanctuary) and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months (3-1/2 years).

The fact that the altar (which was in the courtyard of the temple) was mentioned separately indicates that, the “temple” will be a reference to only the enclosed portion (the holy place and the holy of holies).

Believers are the temple of the holy spirit (1Cor.6:19), and here those who worship God are a part of this measuring. But only the altar and the sanctuary were to be measured, even though the courtyard of the temple was also a part of the temple complex. The altar and the sanctuary within and the courtyard (and the worshipers they represent) will remain protected while believers in the courtyard around them remain unprotected for three and one half years.

11:3 And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

This 1260 day period is about 17 days shy of 3-1/2 years, but is the exact number of days that the woman will be protected in the wilderness in Rev.12:6, so we have a clear and precise overlay of the timing in chapters 11 and 12. We will also see in chapter 12 that the period of protection of the woman in the wilderness is the same as the period during which the devil is free to trample underfoot the courtyard Christians. All-in-all, we have an extremely good case for seeing the four references to 3-1/2 years in Revelation 11 and 12 as being overlays of the same period.

Evangelism will continue during this period no matter what the devil or anyone else tries to do. These witnesses will continue prophesying unscathed for their assigned period, in the very face of Satan. Everyone who tries to harm them will be instantly burned alive. So here is one of the verses where we see that salvation remains available during this period.

11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

These witnesses had dual status of being in the spirit realm as well as the natural realm. In the natural realm they are limited to physical human beings. In the spirit realm they have at least two identities (olive trees and lampstands – fruit and light). As believers we have spiritual identities as well as our physical bodies (Eph.2:6, Rev.2:17, among others). It might be that these two are Moses and Elijah, as they appeared to Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, but we have no way of knowing this for sure (unless there are additional references that I can’t recall at the moment).

11:7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

There is a point when work is done, our testimony is finished, and it's OK to die. Such was the privilege of John the Baptist when he had completed his testimony concerning Jesus. There is a time when our work is done in any ministry that God has called us to, and we need to learn how to let such ministries go.

This beast comes from a different place than either the dragon of chapter 12, or the beast from the sea in chapter 13. It is clear that this abyss opened in chapter 9 contained more than a swarm of locusts. There remain questions that I won’t attempt to answer here.

11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

This quote appears similar to that spoken in Rev.12:10, but it is different in that Rev.12:10 speaks of the authority over earth returning to the saints. 11:15 speaks of the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of God.

This final woe upon the Satan-controlled nations is prophesied in Mt 24:30 where it says “... and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Chapter 12

The word “heaven” used in this chapter, does not always refer to the throne room of God as described in Revelation chapters 4 and 5. Besides the scenery itself, there are other Bible references to “above the heavens” and “passing through the heavens” and other prepositions related to this word. To the best of my understanding, it refers to the spiritual realm in general. In 2 Cor.12:2, Paul refers to a “third” level of heaven, which would be a reference to the throne room of God.

12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

The sun covers the woman instead of exposing her. Believers are clothed with the righteousness of God.

The moon is revealed by the sun. This woman is standing upon that which is revealed by God. In Matthew 16:17-18 we see that the church is built upon the bedrock of revelation from the Father. (Yes, Jesus calls Simon a rock, but He uses a term for stone, or loose rock. He uses a different term meaning bedrock, for that upon which He promises to build His church.) In Ephesians 2:20, we see that Peter, as an apostle, and Jesus Himself are part of the foundation. But the entire church – the foundation and cornerstone included – sit upon the bedrock of revelation from the father.

Stars are defined as messengers in Revelation 1, and in that case applies this term to pastors. The stars in this context may be the leadership of the twelve special messengers Jesus called out (whom He also called apostles). Again, we don’t know this for sure.

12:2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

Birth pangs are associated with end-times teaching in Mt.24:8, and Mk. 13:8. The child within this woman has been growing for some time, and to this point has been indistinguishable from the woman herself. There is now a separation taking place in which this child will take on a unique and heretofore unseen identity.

Why this woman is not Mary:

1. The context is end times (birth pangs).
2. Mary was not chased by the dragon which was thrown out of heaven (vs 12:13)
3. Mary did not have the ground open to swallow the dragon's flood. (vs 12:16)
4. Mary was not moved to the wilderness to protect her from the dragon for 3-1/2 years. (vs 12:14)
5. Mary gave birth to Jesus, but not directly to Christians (vs 12:17)

Why the church is a better candidate:

1. In Mt.16:17-18 we see that the church is built on revelation from the Father. Here we see the woman standing on the moon, which is revealed by the sun.
2. We see that the woman has given birth to believers in verse 12:17 – in addition to the man child of verse 5. (We will see why this man child was not Jesus in a few verses.)

3. Christians are referred to as the temple both individually and corporately in various parts of the New Testament. We see a similar three-part structure related to the woman: The man child in verse 5, herself, and “the rest of her children” spoken of in verse 17.

Note that the woman cried out in the pain of childbirth. The stress in the church in this case is internal, rather than due to external persecution. This man child is to be a category of believers that go beyond the norm in the intensity of their dedication. They are a challenge to the status quo. This correlates nicely with Rom.8:19-22

12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.

The dragon is clearly identified as Satan in verse 9. The context here and in a few other places applies it to the spiritual realm to distinguish it from the physical realm.

The dragon is seen in heaven in verse 3, and there is war in heaven involving the dragon in verse 7. But in verse 5 we see the man child birthed of the woman in heaven, but then caught up to the throne of God – a location above the heaven in which he is born. The context makes it clear that the dragon has no power in this higher level of heaven.

Later we see Satan cast out of heaven, and limited to earth. So this “heaven” in verses 3 and 4 is the part of the spiritual realm within which the “prince and power of the air” (Satan) has been functioning to this point. But it is also evident that there is a different level within this spiritual realm, to which Satan has no access.

12:4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

Initially I assumed that the stars were angels, but in 12:7 and 12:9 Satan’s angels are referred to as his angels. In verse 9, we see that Satan’s angels were thrown down with him, but here, I believe Satan’s assault on the stars in this case was intentional, rather than clumsy, and that these stars of heaven did not belong to him.

In Rev.1:20 the stars refer to the pastors of the seven churches.

There are two actions concerning the stars here: The dragon “draweth” (pulling something in the direction you are going), and “did cast” (send something in a place you are not – but soon will be in the dragon’s case). Clearly, this action was an intentional attack.

In Rev. 1:20 stars refer to angels to the seven churches to whom John is to write physical letters. This word “angel” simply means messenger – same word used for pastor in this context. So in that verse we see humans with spiritual identities (stars) and earthly identities (they are messengers). In the broader sense, all believers have dual citizenship in the heavenly and earthly realms, although some stars may shine brighter than others. Consider **Eph.2:5-6 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.**

I believe verse 12:4 applies to believers that Satan has conned out of their spiritual authority (as he did to Adam and Eve), this would not mean that they were not saved, it would simply mean they failed to exercise their spiritual authority. In addition to the Garden of Eden account, this parallels **Dan.11:35 And some of them that are wise shall fall, to refine them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for the time appointed.** Satan had succeeded in prying Adam and Eve and others out of the spirit realm, and now intends to deprive this man-child of spiritual authority as well. This interpretation is further bolstered by the specific reference to “the third part” – a possible reference to the courtyard believers who will be “trampled underfoot” for three and one half years in Rev. 11.

The fact that these stars are swept away before the war in heaven, and that Satan was the one who drew them out of their spiritual authority in heaven and limited them into the natural realm makes me believe that this is in fact a category of believer. Verse 9 tells us that Satan's angels (not called "stars") were cast down with him, and not by him. Very important: Satan does not have the power to pluck anyone from God's hands, but is proven capable of seducing them into abandoning supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit that operate from out of the spirit realm.

12:5 And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Note that the woman, the dragon, and this birth are all seen in a spiritual realm (heaven), and at this point are not necessarily manifest on earth.

Why this man child is not Jesus:

1. Jesus was not taken away to heaven to protect Him from the dragon. The nearest conceivable correlation was the flight to Egypt – an unlikely comparison. Otherwise, Satan was given full access to His earthly body, to tempt, destroy and crucify it.
2. The context is end times.
3. The mother is not Mary.
4. This birth takes place in the spirit realm (i.e. heaven), as described above, rather than on earth.
5. Verse 5 speaks of this man child ruling the nations with a rod of iron. This function is applied to believers in Rev. 2:26-28 (and may have a parallel application to believers where it also occurs in Ps.2:8-9).

In fitting these pieces together we see this man child as a category of believers that will arise from within the church. This is a particular threat to Satan in that it says of this man child that he is to "to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" – something Satan has been doing since the fall.

It is also significant that the man child remained protected while developing within the church. There appeared to be vulnerability however as this man child surged forward in a greater level of spiritual authority. This higher level of authority placed this man child out of the dragon's reach.

There is often a culturally acceptable level of Christianity, but we must choose to go beyond that. This accepted level is kind of a resting place where we are actively pursuing God – at least some of the time. The man child in Rev. 12 is believers who have chosen to pull away from the accepted level of spirituality and surge forward in more committed moment-by-moment pursuit of God's heart. These would be the believers who chose to open the door presented to the church of Laodicea in Rev.3:20.

The woman of Revelation 12 is in agony as she begins to give birth. In birth there is a separation in the process of life. This is not the point at which life is created. This life has been in there for some time and quietly growing. Until this point it has been indistinguishable from the woman.

But now birth. This life takes on an identity of its own as it surges forth from the woman in a stressful period of separation. In so doing it finds new means of acquiring nourishment and breath (spirit). It now breaths on its own. A son that has been growing hidden in the womb has now become manifest. The woman herself also is soon to become more evident as a unique and independent identity. She has to this point been connected to the global culture and infrastructure. She grew up there.

12:6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Now the world has become an actively hostile place that seeks to destroy her. God has made provision for her care that is separate and independent from the mainstream infrastructure. God has also provided a means for her to get there. But she must trust God enough to leave everything she has known behind, and flee to where He leads. Like the child to whom she has just given birth, she must

acquire – she is given – alternative means of nourishment and breath. Consider Mt.6:33, and also **Isaiah 43:19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now shall it spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.**

Keep in mind that this was written centuries after the Israeli exodus from Egypt. The desperation of this flight is softened by the fact that a safe and provisioned destination awaits. The word “place” also means opportunity, which may or may not apply here, but could broaden the definition of this “place” to an unlimited number of locations scattered throughout the earth. Conceivably, it might also refer to sets of local conditions. Until then, we all await further understandings.

Either way, both the man child and the woman depart from cultural and infrastructural dependence upon the world's systems. There is no indication that “rest of her seed” of verse 17 have departed from these dependencies, so they remain vulnerable to those who control the infrastructure, and are eligible to be “trampled underfoot,” as spoken of in chapter 11.

A little later in this chapter we will see Satan in pursuit of the woman in the physical realm, but the assault upon the man child takes place in the spiritual realm. Certainly the political and cultural assaults and persecution against believers in the natural is a formidable challenge, and Satan's objective is to oppose this birth in the spirit realm by whatever means he can.

The man child has a level of safety while still developing in the womb, but powerful forces of temptation and deception await those who would step forth as determined spirit warriors. They are on the cutting edge, and there are none ahead to mentor them and lead the way. It is a lonely place, an insecure place where God alone is their guide and comfort, and their very survival depends upon their determination to follow the heart of God. When Adam and Eve obeyed Satan, they lost their spiritual position of authority over the earth, and became beings that would be dominated by the one who now held this position of authority (Satan) in the spiritual realm.

On another thread, we see a significant parallel in chapter 11, where altar and sanctuary Christians are protected from the gentiles for 3-1/2 years. This should tell us that the woman consists of those who worship God. In Rev.12:6, we also see the woman being protected for 3-1/2 years. Who then, is this man child?

Although tens of thousands of Christians already existed by the time it was written, Rom.8:19-20 tells us that **“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope”** This would tell us that there was a category of believer that was yet to be revealed, and Rom.8: 21-22 tells us what will happen when they are. **“that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”**

In Revelation 12:5 This man child is one **“who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.”** Psalms 2:7-9 says **“I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.”** Some may construe this as prophetic of the birth of Jesus, and I won't attempt to debate that. More clearly, in that this “Today” was received hundreds of years before Christ, and that God had already ruled and destroyed nations with a rod of iron (not to mention an occasional grasshopper), this rod of iron was being granted to – and was historically fulfilled by – David. For another scriptural tie-in, consider Rev.2:26-27, where the overcomers at Thyatira are granted this same privilege and tool.

So we are looking for a category of believer that will take spiritual warfare to a higher level. We are looking for saints like Daniel and his three friends who stood out from among their fellow exiles in their discipline, purity, and commitment; and the apostles, who stood toe-to-toe with government

officials, physical ailments, and demonic forces. This level of zeal does not slow down and wait for company; they surge boldly forward – as individuals when necessary, but hopefully among other zealots. As such, they are likely to be intimidating and annoying to other believers and cause stresses in popular church structures and dogmas.

As believers, we have dual citizenship in that we are in the world but not of it – indeed, Eph.2:6 declares that besides our temporary period on earth, we are concurrently seated in heavenly places. From such thrones we have the privilege of speaking God’s authority into the physical and spiritual realms around as God would reveal it to us. In 2 Cor.5:17-20, it is clear that we are different, but remain here to express God’s will into the earth.

12:7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

This battle is being waged between God's angels and the dragon's (the devil's) angels. Heb 1:14 tells us a little more about the function of angels: **“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?”** We see from this that the battle was actually between the saints and the devil, with the angels being an army on behalf of the saints. The fact that there even is a war shows that the power of God's angels was not absolute. It therefore was dependent upon the diligence of the saints. The birth of the man child however, has changed this balance of power. He was born to rule with a rod of iron.

12:8 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.

The angel army of the saints is victorious and the devil and his army are thrown out of heaven (the spirit realm) and down to earth (the natural realm). At the very least the ability of Satan to exercise authority from the spiritual realm has been curtailed. He may no longer have authority in the spiritual realm, but as we will see, he is clearly in charge at the political and physical level since the fall.

While Satan still maintained the seat of authority that had been established by God for the rulership of the earth, there was still some reason to respect governments that God had allowed (Paul told believers to respect the authority of Rome for instance). But now Satan has no legitimate authority of any kind, and there is no obligation to respect anything he controls.

I'm almost afraid to speculate on what Satan on earth might look like in the physical sense – but not entirely. I will go so far as to say that I would expect some physical form. (“The aliens have landed.” might be a reaction – I don't know.) In addition to any rational merit for this view, we see in Gen. 3:1 that Satan had a physical form before Adam and Eve gave him their spiritual authority by obeying him. He is described there as a serpent, and is compared as superior in craftiness to any (presumably other) beast of the field. It is significant that in the Revelation scene (vs 12:9) he is referred to as “the serpent of old” – indicating that we've seen this dragon before. In verse 12:3, he is even assigned a color (red)

12:10 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.

Since Adam, the seat of authority for ruling earth had been occupied by Satan. It has now been restored. During the kangaroo court in which Jesus was sentenced to death, Jesus had declared that “My kingdom is not of this world.” Well now, the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ! (This word “salvation” actually means “safe,” or “safety.”)

12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.

This verse makes it even clearer that it was the actions of the saints that have driven Satan out of the position of authority over the earth which had been abdicated by Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God and obeyed Satan. Now these victorious saints have the authority and power over the earth that had once been held by the “prince and the power of the air” – as mentioned by Jesus. The world is now entirely under a new administration.

It should be noted that even before this event, saints have enjoyed the privilege of eroding Satan's territory. In **Luke 10:17-18 The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.** So apparently, this war has been going on for quite awhile.

When seventy of Jesus's disciples (not all His disciples were also called “apostles,”) returned from a foray into the villages He would also enter, they were excited about victories they had experienced in raiding Satan's camps. So even today we may participate in this warfare that will eventually culminate in Satan's expulsion from the spiritual realm.

As it turns out, nature itself has been longing for this moment. Consider a broader application of Rom 8:19-21.

These verses do not stand by themselves. In Gen.3:17-19 we see where the earth was subjected to Satan's authority and cursed. Hosea 4:3 also relates the destruction of the ecology due to the corrupt behavior of people in the land.

Yet again, saints enjoy the privilege of bringing healing to this situation. As we stand in the authority Jesus has delegated to us, we see supernatural healings and other miracles take place that defy and repair the damage caused by Satan's rule.

Satan is having a bad day. First, he wanted to devour the male child, but it was whisked away to safety. Next thing he knew the woman had left town. And now, he was dethroned from his position in the spiritual realm of authority over the earth, that had been abdicated to him by Adam.

We do need to reconsider our subjection to governments at this point: Although Satan no longer has any authority, he still has power, and is about to raise up a replacement based upon power that is devoid of God's authority. Any obedience to *that* government aligns us with disobedience to God!

12:12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

Under the rule of Satan, the earth has become an extremely messy place, and a catastrophic level of cleanup is in order. This is further complicated by the fact that at this point Satan is running rampant in the natural realm, and is more furious and desperate than ever.

12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child.

Satan's first priority once limited to the physical realm is to go after the woman involved in his fall from the spirit realm. The word “persecuted” here means to chase – it does not necessarily mean to catch.

12:14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

As for eagle airlines (I don't think that Pontius the Pilate was involved), this had existed before. Ex.19:4 speaks of such equipment during the Exodus from Egypt, and I don't recall a single reference

to feathers in that flight. So clearly we are in figurative speech here. I am expecting ground transportation at a far more economical and discrete level. I am also expecting this “place” to be locally distributed enclaves of safety and provision. Understand that these are theories based upon rationality as I see it, and are not directly derived from scriptures that I can recall. In verses 6 and 14 we see that this action had been anticipated (even as it has been prophesied here), and travel arrangements and reservations had already been made for a 3-1/2 year stay.

In any case, the church will face a radical change in lifestyle in which dependencies upon (and interactions with) the then current world system and infrastructures are completely severed. She will be dependent upon God for her provision, as was Israel during the Exodus, and as were Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.

I consider it significant that the final feast of Israel was the Feast of Booths – which immediately followed the Day of Atonement. In this feast, their trek through the wilderness following the Exodus was commemorated by “camping out” in shelters made from natural materials. The primary command for this annual occasion was that it was to be celebrated with joy.

12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream.

Satan knows where these people are and sends armies to consume them. (Waters typically refer to peoples and nations in prophetic applications. See Rev.17:15)

12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Now we see what the earth does when it is ruled by the saints. The earth swallows this army. This is reminiscent of the plagues in Egypt leading up to the exodus of Israel, and highlights a very important and consistent pattern in the Bible: God's judgments bring protection and freedom to God's people.

To this point we have seen glimpses of saints overriding the natural realm from the spiritual realm, through the countless miracles of history – and also those experienced in our own lives.

Remember that mankind was in charge of the natural realm before it was abdicated to Satan. We have to consider that with the reinstatement of saints to this position of authority, that the environs of the bride may now be enjoying the pre-fall conditions of the garden of Eden.

Meanwhile, outside of the regions protected for the sake of the bride, the global cleanup begins in earnest.

12:17 And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:

It is very important to note that this “rest of her seed” are defined as believers who are apparently identifiable as such during this final 3-1/2 years. The word “rest” indicates that there are more believers being protected somewhere else – the woman, and the man child, for instance. Inasmuch as believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit, this “rest of her seed” would refer to the courtyard Christians being trampled underfoot by the gentiles for three and one half years, as described in chapter 11.

To this point we have accounted for the man child and the woman, but some of the children are left outside. I see a parallel here with the five foolish virgins who didn't bring enough oil and got left outside the marriage feast. Enthusiasm for the things of God makes a difference. Some of the woman's children are within the dragon's reach.

These “courtyard” Christians had better hide well! But there is another factor to consider here. My opinion: I believe that Satan can no longer tempt people from the spiritual realm at this point. Sin is irrational, and we all understand this. How often have we all known better about something and yet

done it anyway. Once again we kick ourselves, repent, and try again. We have been battered by strong spiritual forces that repeatedly managed to draw us into evil and irrational bondage.

But with Satan and his angels cast out, there are no such forces in the spiritual realm invading our psyche. Granted, there will still be powerful “incentive programs” that these people will have to deal with (such as “Do this or I will kill you”). But they will now be free to rationally choose between a brief physical death and an eternity in hell – no rational contest.

So where did these believers come from, and why are they still in the world in the final 3-1/2 years? In closing this chapter, I quote **Dan.11:35: “And some of them that are wise shall fall, to refine them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for the time appointed.”**

Chapter 12 of Daniel describes something similar in the final 3-1/2 years of human history. In Daniel 12:3 he speaks of believers living among non-believers. **Daniel 12:3 “And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”**

So if Satan wasn’t having a bad enough day, even as he turns to trample these courtyard Christians he finds that they have already launched a counter-attack, and are busy evangelizing his own back yard!

Chapter 13

By this point Satan has been cast out of heaven and is scrambling for his last vestige of control on planet Earth. In assembling control he gives authority to a coalition referred to as “the beast.”

Rev.13:5 A mouth was given to him speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

This is the fifth and final reference to a 3-1/2 period in Revelation, and is clearly a third narrative providing additional information relating to this period.

Under this system, provision to live is granted only to those who will worship an image that Satan will have built, but those who *do* worship it will be damned for eternity. Evangelism continues as Plagues and persecution reach a crescendo, and then the Lord returns.