COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE 83

Exposing the Myth of Satan's Fall

STUDY GUIDE 4 OF 5:

The Great Dragon and the War in Heaven

An overview of spiritual warfare and the dragon's true meaning.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

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PREFACE

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Long-held religious traditions must be tested against the truth of Scripture. Familiarity does not establish biblical authority, and every teaching must remain subject to the Word of God. This Study Guide examines **Revelation 12:9**, which speaks of the great dragon being cast out of heaven.

Many have assumed that this verse refers to the personal fall of Satan from God's presence. A careful reading of the Scriptures shows that this vision describes not a physical event in a celestial realm, but a spiritual conflict within the hearts of men and women and within the history of the Church. The term dragon symbolises the great worldly powers and religious systems through which Satan works to oppose truth.

As Pharaoh was called the great dragon in Ezekiel 29, so the dragon of Revelation portrays pagan Rome and every earthly power that resists Christ's Church. The casting down of the dragon marks the defeat of deception by the light of divine truth. This Study Guide therefore distinguishes Scripture from tradition.

It shows that the warfare of Revelation is spiritual, not celestial; moral, not mythological. Its message reminds the student that Satan's true power is not in rebellion, but in deception, and that through Christ, every believer has authority to overcome him by faith and obedience to God's Word. The study will examine the woman and the man child, the falling stars, Michael and his messengers, and the victory declared through the blood of the Lamb.

It will also consider why Peter could be addressed as Satan, why Judas could be called a devil, and what it means to present oneself before the Lord. These subjects belong together because they distinguish the spiritual adversary from the human and institutional instruments through which he works.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must the dragon's earthly instruments be distinguished from the spirit working through them?

Personal Reflection

What human power or institution has made you uneasy, and why?

Action Step

When religious or political power makes you afraid, what will you remember about Satan's limited influence and Christ's authority? How will that change your conduct towards others?

INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

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For centuries, the idea of fallen angels warring in heaven has captured the imagination of religion. Yet the Bible never records such a conflict. Its focus is always the struggle between light and darkness within the realm of human experience.

Revelation 12, when read through spiritual understanding, reveals this same battle. The woman clothed with the sun represents the true Church, radiant with the light of divine

revelation. The dragon standing before her pictures the system of opposition - pagan Rome, false religion, and every human power that resists the birth of truth.

The war in heaven symbolises the conflict between faith and unbelief, between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of deception. Just as Jesus described Satan falling as lightning when His disciples returned from their mission, so John's vision shows the same principle in prophetic form. Whenever truth is declared, the authority of error is cast down.

The heaven from which the dragon falls is the high place of influence he once held in the minds and hearts of people. The earth to which he is cast represents the lower realm of carnal reasoning and worldly systems. Through this revelation, the believer learns that victory over the dragon is not achieved by human effort, but through the indwelling Christ. The Word of God, the blood of the Lamb, and the testimony of faithful saints are the weapons that overcome every false power.

John records in **Revelation 12:11**:

> *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."*

Thus, the teaching reminds every student that the battlefield is spiritual, and the victory already secured in Christ. The dragon has no authority over those who walk in the light of truth. Jesus Christ remains the centre of this teaching.

The Church does not overcome because her members have mastered a prophetic explanation or gained power independently of Him. Every born-again believer possesses His life, and the spiritual victory described in Revelation must be understood through that present union with Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ's life within His people explain victory in the spiritual conflict?

Personal Reflection

What difference should His completed victory make when deception troubles your confidence?

Action Step

Think of a recent occasion when deception weakened your confidence. How will you return to God's Word and trust the life of Christ within rather than fear?

THE FALLEN-ANGEL TEACHING AND THE CASTING DOWN OF THE DRAGON

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The belief that angels once rebelled in heaven and were cast out has shaped the thinking of generations. It is repeated in sermons, hymns, and religious writings, and is now accepted as fact by nearly every major branch of Christianity. Yet, despite its popularity, this idea did not come from divine revelation. It was formed through imagination and tradition, rather than through the careful study of Scripture.

What the Bible Does Not Say

When we examine the Word of God itself, we find that it never once:

- describes a rebellion of angels in the presence of God;
- records any warfare among celestial beings before the creation of man;
- presents Satan as a holy being who fell and became evil.

These ideas entered theology through misused symbols and poetic figures. Scriptures that originally referred to proud earthly rulers, such as the kings of Babylon and Tyre, were lifted from their historical context and applied to invisible spirits. Over centuries, these interpretations hardened into tradition until they came to be treated as truth.

The Effect of False Interpretation

This false doctrine is not a small matter. It reshapes how people understand sin, temptation, and personal responsibility. When Satan is wrongly believed to be a fallen angel, the focus shifts from the true source of sin - the human heart - to an imagined external enemy.

This deception leads many to believe that sin cannot be overcome. It suggests that disobedience is unavoidable, rather than exposing sin as the result of personal choice, unbelief, and rebellion against the light of truth. Many who hold this view confess that they sin every day in thought, word, and deed.

They claim it is impossible to live free from sin. However, this teaching denies the power of the Gospel to save, purify, and keep God's people in righteousness.

John declared in **1 John 3:6**:

> *"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."*

This Scripture plainly shows that those who abide in Christ do not continue in sin. The idea that sin is inevitable directly contradicts the Word of God. The Bible reveals something far different from popular tradition.

Satan operates only within the limits of God's will. He cannot force anyone to disobey. His role is to test and reveal what is hidden in the heart.

His influence depends entirely on deception and unbelief, not on power or rebellion. He rules only where truth is resisted. Therefore, the true battle is not physical or celestial.

It is a moral and spiritual conflict. It is fought within the heart. Victory belongs to those who believe the truth, obey the Gospel, and walk in the power of Christ.

Scripture Alone Our Guide

Every sound doctrine must rest upon the written Word. Tradition cannot interpret truth. When the Scriptures are allowed to speak for themselves, the supposed *"fall of angels"* disappears entirely.

Verses long used to defend it, when read in their proper setting, speak instead of human pride, false worship, and the fall of earthly powers. In this way, the Word of God corrects the

fables that have entered religion and restores our understanding of the spiritual conflict that continues within mankind.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does explaining sin through an imagined celestial rebellion weaken personal responsibility?

Personal Reflection

What does Christ's freedom mean for an excuse you may be tempted to make for disobedience?

Action Step

Name an excuse you have used for a wrong choice. What must you stop excusing, and what different decision will express the freedom Christ gives?

The Path Ahead

The next part of our study will examine **Revelation 12:9**, a verse often quoted to support the fallen angel idea. However, as we will see, this vision describes not the expulsion of celestial beings, but the casting down of deception from its high place of influence. Through the light of truth, falsehood is overthrown, and the authority of error is brought low.

Thus, the Bible presents a consistent message: the warfare of God's people is spiritual, not celestial. It concerns the victory of truth over error, and the triumph of Christ within the human heart.

The Casting Down of the Dragon

John recorded the vision in **Revelation 12:9**:

> *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

Is this the final proof that Satan was once in heaven and was cast out? Many assume this verse confirms a literal rebellion in heaven, yet we must read it carefully and let Scripture explain Scripture. First, notice that the great dragon and his angels were cast out into the earth in **Revelation 12:9**. Other verses describe similar language, but with different settings:

- In **2 Peter 2:4**, the angels were cast down to hell;
- In **Isaiah 14:12**, Lucifer, the king of Babylon, was cut down to the ground;
- In **Jude 1**:6, the angels who sinned were reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day.

These are clearly describing different conditions and circumstances. They are not literal places but spiritual states showing a fall from divine truth and favour. Each phrase represents separation from the light, not a physical location in space.

Comparing the Accounts

Are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Luke, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation reporting the same event, or are they using similar symbols to describe moral and spiritual downfall in different settings? If they were describing one event, the details would agree exactly. Yet they do not.

This shows that each prophet was addressing a different situation under the same spiritual principle. These questions must be faced honestly. If we claim repeated angelic rebellions, we must also accept that Heaven is a place of recurring disorder.

Scripture gives no such picture. The Word of God reveals harmony in Heaven and conflict only on earth, where truth and deception strive for the hearts of men. The reality is that these verses speak of people, nations, and religious systems that have fallen from truth.

The casting down symbolises the exposure and overthrow of error. It shows how falsehood loses its exalted position when confronted by the light of God's Word.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must the different settings of Isaiah, Peter, Jude and Revelation remain distinct?

Personal Reflection

How willing are you to accept correction when familiar symbols do not establish the history you assumed?

Action Step

Choose a claim that joins Isaiah, Peter, Jude and Revelation as one event. What will you check about each account before repeating it, and what might you need to correct?

THE IDENTITY OF THE GREAT DRAGON

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So, who then is this great dragon that John is writing about here in **Revelation 12:9**? If it is not the devil himself, then who or what is the Scripture depicting? To understand the identity of this red dragon, it is important first to remind ourselves of the scope and language of Revelation.

The Scope of Revelation

In the first chapter of Revelation, Jesus clearly gave the scope of the vision that He revealed to John.

He said in **Revelation 1:19**:

> *"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."*

This verse shows that Revelation covers the entire journey of the Church from Pentecost through the whole Gospel Day. It unfolds both the victory of the Church through Jesus Christ and the continual opposition that rises against her. This is also confirmed by the command John received to send letters to the seven churches of Asia.

Together, these churches represent the complete history of the true Church in her seven spiritual conditions, from the first century until the end of time. Each letter reveals Christ's

abiding presence among His people and exposes the opposing forces that war against truth throughout every age.

The Language of Revelation

The language of Revelation is symbolic and must not be taken literally. The first verse of the book provides the key to its interpretation.

John writes in **Revelation 1:1**:

> *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."*

The word signified comes from the Greek word SĒMAINŌ, meaning *"to reveal or express through signs or symbols."* The root SIGNUM, from Latin, means a token, mark, or symbol, and gives us English words such as signal and signify. This shows that the entire book of Revelation was written in a language of symbols, through which God revealed spiritual truths concerning Christ, His Church, and the powers that oppose her during the Gospel Day.

This symbolic nature is confirmed again in **Revelation 9:17**, where John says:

> *"And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone."*

By saying in the vision rather than a vision, John reveals that the whole book is one continuous vision, not a collection of separate or unrelated scenes. From earlier studies in the module *"The Language of the Bible,"* we remember that visions are always symbolic. Therefore, every scene and description in Revelation conveys spiritual truth through symbolic imagery.

We are never meant to see a literal seven headed beast, or a woman standing on the moon while clothed with the sun. These are vivid symbols that express spiritual realities. In the same way, the great red dragon is not a literal creature, but a symbol representing a spiritual power that works in opposition to Christ and His Church.

This dragon portrays a system or power through which Satan operates to resist the truth during the Gospel Day. This method of interpretation is used throughout the book. Kings are seen as beasts, kingdoms as horns, and the casting down of deception as war in heaven - a symbolic expression for exalted positions held within the heart. These images reveal how spiritual forces work through visible powers on earth, but the true conflict is fought in the inner life where truth brings down pride and error.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Revelation's use of signs help distinguish a spiritual power from its prophetic picture?

Personal Reflection

How easily can an impressive picture of prophecy make you certain of something you have not checked?

Action Step

Think of a dramatic explanation of Revelation you have heard. What will you examine in the surrounding verses before accepting it, and how will you respond if the claim is not supported?

The Meaning of the Great Dragon

How can we be sure that John was not speaking of the devil himself? John calls the great dragon *"that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan"*. The symbolic figure identifies the deceiving spirit working through the earthly power. In this vision, the dragon represents pagan Rome, the political and religious instrument through which Satan opposed Christ and His Church. Its casting down describes the overthrow of that deceptive authority, not a holy angel becoming Satan through a physical fall from God's celestial dwelling. John is describing the power or system through which Satan worked, not Satan in person.

Serpents represent deceptive spirits in this prophetic language. John's words refer to a deceptive spirit, or a system influenced by that spirit, through which Satan seeks to deceive the world. It is true that this spirit and the pagan system that it produced originated from the devil.

Yet the verse itself does not speak of Satan as a being cast out of heaven. Rather, it portrays earthly powers and religious instruments that were inspired by him and used to oppose the truth being cast to the earth. Thus, the great dragon symbolises a worldly and deceptive system, working under Satan's influence, but operating through human institutions that resisted Christ and His Church.

The distinction is between the deceiving spirit and the instrument through which it operates. Calling the dragon a symbol does not make Satan imaginary, nor does it make the opposition unreal. The spiritual adversary works through earthly powers, while the vision makes the nature and defeat of that opposition visible through prophetic imagery.

Pharaoh Called a Great Dragon

In the book of Ezekiel, Pharaoh is also called a *"great dragon."* This shows that the word dragon was already used in the Old Testament as a symbol of earthly rulers or kingdoms that resisted God's purpose.

Ezekiel 29:1-3 records the Lord's message to the prophet:

> *"In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself."*

Pharaoh stood as the proud ruler of Egypt and became an instrument through whom the devil worked to oppose God's people. His boast over the river shows the same spirit of self-exaltation that continually seeks to challenge the authority of God. This clearly demonstrates that the word dragon was used symbolically to describe earthly rulers who exalted themselves against God and persecuted His people.

Pharaoh's Pride and Symbolism

Ezekiel's description of Pharaoh as a *"great dragon"* uses the same expression later found in Revelation 12 to describe the Devil and Satan. Egypt was a pagan kingdom, just as the Roman Empire was during the time of the early Church. Both served as instruments of the same deceiving spirit that opposed the work of God.

Pharaoh claimed ownership over the Nile and exalted himself as a god. In the same way, Caesars of Rome claimed divine titles and ruled over the nations through law, military might, and idolatry. These rulers stood as proud figures of opposition to the message of truth.

Therefore, the great dragon in Revelation 12 does not represent a personal devil, but a symbol of pagan Rome - the earthly power through which Satan worked to resist Christ and persecute His Church. This connection shows that the word dragon represents pagan systems of worship and political power that stand in opposition to divine truth. Just as Pharaoh resisted Moses and sought to enslave Israel, pagan Rome resisted Christ, enslaving nations in idolatry and persecuting the saints.

The great dragon, then, symbolises a system of worldly dominion that exalts itself against God. It operates through deception and pride, drawing strength from human governments and religions that are not subject to the Gospel.

The Power to Overcome

In **Luke 10:18-19**, Jesus said to His disciples:

> *"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."*

Jesus revealed that Satan's fall was not a physical descent from a literal heaven, but the loss of his authority in the hearts of men as the power of the Gospel triumphed. He promised that His followers would receive spiritual power to overcome serpents and scorpions - symbols of deceptive and tormenting spirits that rise against truth. This victory was seen through the ministry of Christ's disciples and continued in the early Church, when the Gospel broke the hold of superstition and idolatry.

It continued throughout the Gospel Day, as the light of divine truth conquered the darkness of paganism and destroyed the power of deception that once ruled the Roman world. Through this same power, every believer today may walk in the same triumph, overcoming error by truth, and darkness by light.

The Lion, the Adder, and the Dragon

This same promise is echoed in **Psalm 91:13**:

> *"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."*

Here the lion symbolises the devil, who is described in **1 Peter 5:8** as *"your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* The adder, however, is a venomous serpent known for its hidden and sudden attack. It does not roar like the lion or strike openly like the dragon, but waits silently, concealed in the path, to wound the unsuspecting traveller.

Spiritually, the adder represents subtle and deceitful temptation - the quiet working of false beliefs, secret sin, or inward corruption that seeks to poison the soul. Where the lion symbolises open persecution, the adder represents secret deceit, and the dragon portrays large systems of false religion and pagan power that war against the truth. The clearest historical example of this was the pagan Roman Empire, the great adversary of Christ and His Church, through which Satan sought to destroy the early believers.

Overcoming the Dragon Through Christ Within

These Scriptures show that the dragon represents a deceptive spirit working through earthly powers and human systems, not a fallen angel. Through Christ, every believer is given authority to overcome every spirit that opposes truth and hinders the work of God. As Jesus assured His disciples, the power of the Gospel enables His followers to tread upon and trample underfoot all the forces of darkness.

John wrote in **1 John 4:4**:

> *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."*

John reminds us that the Spirit of Christ within is greater than every opposing power. Believers overcome deception and worldly influence not by human strength, but by the life and authority of Christ dwelling within. This promise stands sure: the Spirit of God in the believer is stronger than every spirit of falsehood that once worked through pagan Rome and that still operates in the world today.

Through the indwelling Christ, the Church continues to conquer, and the dragon remains forever cast down. The relationship between the dragon, paganism and the Roman Empire is examined more fully in the module Babylon Unveiled.

Summary: The Identity of the Great Dragon

Revelation 12:9 does not describe Satan himself, but a symbolic system through which he worked. The book of Revelation uses symbolic language to portray spiritual truths. The *"great*

dragon" represents pagan Rome, the political and religious system that opposed Christ and persecuted the early Church.

This image follows biblical patterns, such as Ezekiel's reference to Pharaoh as a *"great dragon"*, showing how rulers resisting God were portrayed symbolically. This dragon embodies worldly pride, deception, and resistance to truth, not a literal creature or a personal devil. Jesus and the apostles taught that believers have power through the Gospel to overcome these spiritual forces.

As Psalm 91 and Luke 10 show, Christians are empowered to tread upon serpents, scorpions, and dragons - symbols of spiritual enemies. The message of Revelation is clear: the Church, through Christ within, continues to conquer the powers of darkness. The dragon remains defeated, and the Spirit of God in the believer is greater than any opposing force.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Pharaoh's description as a dragon help explain pagan Rome's opposition to the Church?

Personal Reflection

How should Christ's greater power change your response to proud human authority?

Action Step

Is someone in authority pressuring you to act against what Jesus Christ teaches? How will you remain respectful while refusing to compromise the truth?

THE WOMAN AND THE MAN CHILD

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The vision in Revelation 12 contains some of the most powerful prophetic symbols in the Bible. To understand its message, we must rightly identify the woman and the man child. These figures are not literal, but spiritual representations of God's Church and her redeemed children.

The vision opens in **Revelation 12:1-2**:

> *"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."*

This symbolic woman and her child are central to the chapter. They represent the Church and her spiritual offspring, brought forth by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Woman Symbolises the Church

The woman John saw was *"clothed with the sun"*, a symbol of full divine light and Gospel truth. The *"moon under her feet"* represents the Old Covenant, now fulfilled in Christ. The *"crown of twelve stars"* symbolises the apostolic doctrine and authority upon which the Church is built.

This interpretation is confirmed in **Ephesians 2:20**, where Paul writes:

> *"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."*

It also aligns with **Revelation 21:14**:

> *"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."*

These twelve stars represent the divine order, heavenly rule, and teaching authority of the apostles, which shine as guiding lights in the Church's spiritual crown. The crown therefore directs attention to the truth entrusted to the ministry rather than to personal titles or human prestige. Jesus Christ Himself is the chief corner stone, and the authority of His messengers rests in the Word they have received from Him. The Church remains under His government as that truth is faithfully proclaimed.

A Woman Clothed with the Sun

The entire appearance of the woman is symbolic and pointing to a spiritual reality. No natural woman can be clothed with the sun, which burns at an estimated 5,500°C on its surface and over 15 million°C at its core. This alone proves that the vision cannot be taken literally.

Not a Natural Woman in Heaven

Likewise, Jesus explained in **Luke 20:34-35** that there is no marriage in Heaven:

> *"And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage."*

He was responding to the Sadducees, a Jewish group who denied the resurrection. They had asked about a woman who had been married to seven brothers, referring to the law of levirate marriage, which required a man to marry his deceased brother's widow if the brother died without children. This custom preserved the family name and inheritance.

Jesus used this question to teach that marriage belongs to this present life. The *"children of this world"* marry, because God established marriage for earthly purposes - family, reproduction, and companionship. In the resurrection, however, people neither marry nor are given in marriage.

In that spiritual realm, relationships are not physical but eternal. Jesus compared them with the angels, who do not reproduce. This proves that the woman in Revelation 12 cannot be a literal female in a literal heaven. There is no childbearing in the eternal Heaven, nor any labour or travail, for Heaven is a place of perfect rest.

The writer of Hebrews affirms this in **Hebrews 4:10-11**:

> *"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the woman's appearance point to a spiritual reality rather than natural life in heaven?

Personal Reflection

What does the woman's spiritual meaning help you understand about trusting Christ rather than an imagined physical scene?

Action Step

When describing the woman of Revelation 12, what will you change if you have relied on a physical picture rather than the spiritual meaning? Explain how you will keep Christ and His Church central.

The Woman as the New Jerusalem

Since a literal interpretation would contradict the clear teaching of Scripture, we understand that the woman symbolises the New Jerusalem, which came down from God out of heaven on the Day of Pentecost. She is clothed with the light of divine truth and crowned with the authority of heavenly revelation.

John saw her in **Revelation 21:2**:

> *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

Paul affirms in **Galatians 4:26**:

> *"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."*

Children are born spiritually alive and are not born guilty of sin. This original innocence must be distinguished from entering the New Covenant Church through the new birth. In the teaching concerning the woman and the man child, Jerusalem represents the Church and her spiritual offspring, brought forth through the Gospel by the power of Jesus Christ. Isaiah prophesied of the Church as the mother travailing to bring forth children, showing the same spiritual truth later revealed in Revelation 12.

Isaiah 66:6-10 records:

> *"A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies. Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:"*

This prophecy parallels the vision recorded in **Revelation 12:4-5**:

> *"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."*

Both Scriptures reveal the same truth in different ways:

- Isaiah saw Zion, the spiritual Jerusalem, travailing to bring forth her children;
- John saw the same Church in prophetic vision, represented as a woman clothed with the sun, bringing forth a man child, the new nation of the redeemed who were born through the travail on the Day of Pentecost.

Isaiah identified the woman who brought forth the man child as Zion, which, according to the writer of Hebrews, is the heavenly Jerusalem and the Church of the living God.

Hebrews 12:22-23 states:

> *"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."*

The Man Child Symbolises the Redeemed

The man child symbolises those who were born of the Spirit and added to the Church through the preaching of the Gospel. It represents the holy nation that was brought forth in one day, the redeemed people of God who became His spiritual kingdom.

1 Peter 2:9 declares:

> *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."*

Through the travail of the early Church and the power of the Holy Spirit, this new nation - the redeemed and sanctified body of believers - was born on the Day of Pentecost. A common misunderstanding is the belief that the birth of the man child represents the birth of Jesus Christ. This cannot be the case, because the woman symbolises the Church.

The Church did not produce Christ; Christ produced the Church.

The woman is Christ's bride, not His mother. Therefore, the man child does not represent Christ Himself, but rather the fruit of the Church's spiritual labour and victory through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church proclaims the Gospel, but she does not produce spiritual life by human ability.

Jesus Christ gives that life through His Spirit when a person believes and is born again. The woman's travail describes her ministry and fruitfulness in union with Him, not a saving power that belongs to a congregation apart from Christ.

The Twin Symbols of the Church

In Revelation 12, the woman clothed with the sun and the man child both represent the Church of God. These are twin symbols revealing one divine body in two distinct spiritual conditions.

- The woman symbolises the Church in her maternal role, clothed with divine light, crowned with apostolic authority, and labouring to bring forth spiritual life.
- The man child represents the redeemed overcomers, the fruit of the Church's union with Christ, brought into life through the ministry of the Word and the Spirit.

The phrase *"caught up unto God, and to his throne"* refers to the Church's spiritual exaltation - her position of divine favour and authority through Christ's indwelling life.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:6**:

> *"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:"*

One Church in Two Dimensions

Together, the woman and the man child form one complete picture of the Church. Revelation 12 reveals one body in two dimensions of experience:

- The woman as maternal and labouring;
- The man child as triumphant and exalted.

The Church is seen both earthly and heavenly, travailing and glorified, bearing and fruitful. It is one spiritual and eternal body in Christ, composed of many members who share her life, her mission, and her victory. These two symbols do not divide believers into an incomplete Church and a later, more fully saved company.

They show the same body in her labour and in the spiritual position Christ has given to the redeemed. Salvation is complete at the new birth; faithful ministry and overcoming are the expression of the life already received in Him.

The Woman and the Man Child - A Comparison

Aspect	The Woman	The Man Child
Symbolic Meaning	The Church - New Jerusalem, mother of the redeemed	The Redeemed - born of the Spirit through the Gospel
Spiritual Identity	Heavenly Jerusalem, bride of Christ	Holy nation, spiritual sons of God
Biblical Description	Clothed with the sun, moon under her feet, crown of 12 stars	Caught up to God, to rule all nations with a rod of iron
Scriptural Reference	**Revelation 12:1-2**; **Galatians 4:26**; **Revelation 21:2**	**Revelation 12:5**; **1 Peter 2:9**; **Ephesians 2:6**

Aspect	The Woman	The Man Child
Origin in Prophecy	Zion travailing in Isaiah 66, seen as the mother of children	Born in one day as a new nation through Pentecostal outpouring
Role in Revelation 12	Spiritual mother enduring conflict and travail	Victorious offspring delivered and elevated
Connection to Christ	The bride Jesus purchased and perfected	The fruit of His labour through the Church

Summary: The Woman and the Man Child - Revelation 12

The vision in Revelation 12 uses symbolic imagery to reveal deep spiritual truths about the Church and her redeemed children. The woman represents the Church, clothed with divine light, founded on apostolic doctrine, and bringing forth spiritual life. She is not a literal female in heaven, but a symbol of the New Jerusalem, the Church of God, born on the Day of Pentecost.

The man child symbolises the redeemed believers, those born of the Spirit through the Gospel. This spiritual birth does not refer to Jesus, but to the holy nation formed by the Church's labour and the Holy Spirit's power. As Isaiah prophesied, and John confirmed, the Church brought forth a new people of God in one day - those who now reign spiritually with Christ. Together, the woman and man child portray one Church in two conditions:

- The woman as the Church labouring on earth;
- The man child as the Church exalted in spiritual authority.

This unified picture shows the Church as both maternal and victorious, travailing to bring forth life and reigning with Christ in heavenly places.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the woman and the man child show one Church in spiritual labour and victory?

Personal Reflection

What difference should complete life in Christ make to the way you regard another born-again believer?

Action Step

Think of a born-again believer you have overlooked. How will you show practical fellowship and care, recognising that both of you share the complete life of Christ?

THE GREAT RED DRAGON AND THE FALLING STARS

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We read further in **Revelation 12:3-4**:

> *"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."*

Many have taught and believed that this describes the devil being cast out of heaven, along with one third of God's angels who supposedly rebelled with him. However, if the woman in verses 1 and 2 is not literal, then the dragon in verses 3 and 4 cannot be literal either. When read carefully, these verses never say or even imply that the dragon himself fell or was cast down.

The verses plainly declare that *"the dragon stood before the woman,"* which occurs after the stars were cast down, while the woman is still described as being in heaven. At the beginning of **Revelation 12:4**, John says that the dragon's tail *"drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth"*. It is vital to notice that it was the tail of the dragon that cast the stars down, not God.

The verses do not say that God cast them down, nor do they suggest any divine judgement upon heavenly beings. The action belongs entirely to the dragon's tail, which symbolises a false and deceptive power dragging others from their exalted position in truth. This distinction is vital to understanding the vision.

The casting down in **Revelation 12:4** does not record a rebellion among celestial angels. It portrays a corrupt system spreading deception, pulling down those who once shone brightly in the light of divine truth. The dragon's tail, representing error and deceit, causes the fall. It is the influence of false religion and corrupted teaching, not the judgement of God, that casts these stars from their heavenly place of spiritual understanding.

The Tail of the Dragon

In **Revelation 12:4**, we read that *"his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth."* This verse holds the key to understanding the vision. It was not God who cast the stars down, but the tail of the dragon. The dragon represents pagan Rome, the great earthly power through which Satan worked, and the tail symbolises the deceptive influence that it spread. Throughout the Scriptures, a tail is used symbolically to represent false prophets and lying teachers who lead others astray.

The prophet explains this symbol for us in **Isaiah 9:15**:

> *"The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail."*

This shows that the tail represents religious deception working through false prophets and teachers. When these reject the truth, they become instruments of the dragon's power, drawing others away from light and understanding. Therefore, when John says that the tail of the dragon cast down the stars of heaven, he is describing how false teaching and spiritual

corruption pulled down those who once shone brightly as ministers or messengers of truth. These stars symbolise ministers or leaders in the Church.

John records the explanation in **Revelation 1:20**:

> *"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."*

The dragon's tail thus represents the deceptive influence of false religion that entered the early Church. Pagan ideas, human traditions, and corrupted doctrines were gradually joined to the truth. As a result, many who had once stood as bright lights in the spiritual heavens were drawn down from their position in truth and cast to the earth.

This is the meaning of the casting down in **Revelation 12:4**. It is not the fall of angels from a physical heaven, but the spiritual fall of ministers and believers who turned from the light of the Gospel and became entangled in error. The tail of the dragon represents false prophets and false teaching, which caused their fall.

Questions That Expose the Literal View

If this Scripture were truly referring to celestial angels who had joined Satan in a rebellion, then several questions immediately arise:

- Why did Satan cast them out, and who gave him the authority or power to do so?
- If Satan and his supposed followers were cast down in verse 4, how can we then explain them being cast out again in verse 9, where the great dragon himself is said to have been cast out?
- The notes in the Full Life Study Bible state that "this may refer to the original fall of Satan." So how many times has God had to cast him out?
- And if he was already cast out, how does he keep finding his way back in?

These questions expose the confusion that arises from a literal interpretation. The truth is that these Scriptures are symbolic and have no reference to a literal devil or to a physical heaven where God dwells. They describe spiritual conditions, systems, and influences that exist upon the earth and oppose the work of God and the truth of His Word.

The Symbol of the Stars

In the Scriptures, stars are used to symbolise the ministry.

We know this because in **Revelation 1:12-16** we read:

> *"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."*

Then **Revelation 1:20** explains the meaning:

> *"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."*

The word translated *"angels"* in **Revelation 1:20** is AGGELOS, meaning messengers (Strong's G32). The explanation concerns the ministers entrusted with carrying God's Word to the churches. Thus, the stars of heaven represent God's ministers, His messengers of light.

When the dragon's tail drew down a third part of the stars, it symbolised how false religion and deception pulled down a portion of the ministry. These ministers fell from their heavenly position of truth and light into the darkness of error.

The Messengers of the Church

Who are the messengers of the Church?

The answer is given in **Daniel 12:3**:

> *"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."*

Who is it that turns people to righteousness? It is the ministry. This truth is supported by **Acts 8:27-31, 35-37**, where Philip explained the Scriptures to the Ethiopian eunuch and led him to Christ and salvation.

It is also confirmed by **Galatians 4:12-14**, where Paul reminds the believers how they received him *"as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus."* Therefore, the angels of the churches represent the messengers, pastors, and ministers whom God has called to proclaim His Word. These are the true stars of heaven who shine with the light of truth.

The Meaning of the Falling Stars

Jude 1:13 speaks of *"wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever,"* connecting them with the angels which kept not their first estate in **Jude 1**:6. Just as Jude and Peter described ministers who turned away from God, John in Revelation 12 shows the same spiritual condition. These are not literal stars falling from the sky, but fallen ministers who have departed from truth through deception. This same theme appears elsewhere in Scripture.

Jesus said in **Mark 13:25**:

> *"And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken."*

Clearly, Christ was not speaking of God's literal heaven, for the power in God's heaven is God Himself, and He cannot be shaken.

Psalm 46:4-5 confirms this:

> *"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early."*

The writer of **Hebrews 12:25-28** also declares that God's kingdom cannot be moved:

> *"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."*

Therefore, what Christ spoke of in Mark 13 mirrors the message of Jude, Peter, and John.

It reveals the fall of false Christs and false prophets who deceive and lead astray, just as Jesus warned in **Mark 13:22**:

> *"For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."*

The Spiritual Heaven and the Falling Stars

The heaven described in Revelation is not a physical place in the skies above, but a spiritual realm where believers receive truth and fellowship with Christ. Paul called this the third heaven in **2 Corinthians 12:1-2**, the same realm he later described as *"heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* in **Ephesians 2:6**. It is the spiritual position where believers are raised with Christ and where divine revelation is given.

When John saw the stars fall from heaven, it represented those who once held this exalted position in truth but were drawn down through deception. Their fall was not from a celestial heaven, but from the spiritual realm of revelation and authority in Christ. The dragon's tail - symbolising false prophets and corrupt teaching - caused their descent from spiritual light to darkness. This spiritual use of heaven is examined more fully in The Fall from Heaven.

Summary: The Great Red Dragon and the Falling Stars - Revelation 12:3-4

The great red dragon in Revelation 12 is symbolic, not literal, representing pagan Rome as a system through which Satan worked. The seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns symbolise political and religious power. The tail of the dragon, not God, casts a third of the stars of heaven to the earth - signifying ministers or leaders in the Church who fell from truth due to false teaching and spiritual deception.

The tail, as explained in **Isaiah 9:15**, represents lying prophets and false doctrine. These influences corrupted the early Church and pulled down once-faithful ministers, symbolised as stars (**Revelation 1:20**). This is not about fallen angels but about spiritual leaders losing their heavenly position.

The fall described is from a spiritual heaven - the realm of truth, authority, and fellowship in Christ - not a literal heaven. The stars fell due to corruption and deception, not divine judgement. This aligns with Jude, Peter, and Jesus' warnings about false prophets, and it

confirms the spiritual nature of the vision and the battle being fought within the hearts and minds of people.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the dragon's tail drawing down stars describe deception within ministry?

Personal Reflection

What does the warning about fallen ministers lead you to consider about receiving correction?

Action Step

Have you repeated a teaching because a respected minister taught it? What will you compare with the Bible before repeating it again, and how will you receive correction?

THE DRAGON'S OPPOSITION TO THE CHURCH

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Once again, **Revelation 12:4** tells us:

> *"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."*

This reveals that from the very moment a soul accepts salvation and becomes a born-again child of God, Satan begins working to destroy that new life.

For this reason **1 Peter 5:8** warns:

> *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."*

Nevertheless, the true Church continues to grow and expand, constantly reaching out to honest hearts and bringing them to Christ through the message of salvation.

John continues in **Revelation 12:5**:

> *"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."*

This signifies being lifted to a place of divine protection and spiritual security, a position from which believers cannot be moved as long as they continue to trust in the Lord.

The Presence of God Among His People

Certainly, we know that God dwells in heaven, but we also know that He dwells in the midst of His people, the Church, right here on earth.

His presence abides wherever His Spirit is found, as **Matthew 18:20** reminds us:

> *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

It is therefore clear that the heaven in which the woman and the great red dragon appeared is not the celestial heaven where God dwells eternally. If it were, the man child would not have needed to be *"caught up unto God, and to his throne,"* for anything born in that eternal realm would already be in God's immediate presence. The heaven of Revelation 12 therefore

represents the spiritual realm of the Church, the heavenly place in Christ Jesus where believers are raised to sit with Him.

Ephesians 2:6 describes this exalted position:

> *"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:"*

It is within this spiritual realm that the conflict between truth and deception unfolds. Yet it is also here that God's people find refuge, strength, and victory through Christ. He abides among His redeemed, empowering them to overcome every work of the dragon through the Word of God and the indwelling Spirit of truth.

God's presence in the gathering does not mean that Christ is absent when a believer is alone. Jesus Christ dwells within every person who is born again, and the gathered Church shares the life already present in her members. Fellowship expresses that union; it does not create or complete it.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How can the Church face opposition while sharing a secure spiritual position in Christ?

Personal Reflection

How do you react when someone newly born again meets opposition or discouragement?

Action Step

When opposition threatens a new believer, what will you do to encourage and support that person without claiming the power to give spiritual life yourself?

The Devil's Wrath Against the Church

John records in **Revelation 12:12**:

> *"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."*

This verse shows that when Christ came, He cast Satan down from his position of rule and influence over people's lives. Once the light of the Gospel shone into human hearts, the devil could no longer reign as the prince of this world. Knowing that his time was short, he was filled with wrath, for the power of divine truth had overthrown his dominion.

John continues in **Revelation 12:13**:

> *"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."*

When the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he did not give up. He immediately turned his fury against the woman, the true Church of God. The woman had brought forth the man child, representing her newborn converts in Christ, and the devil now sought to destroy both the mother and her offspring.

In spiritual meaning, this reveals that the devil persecuted the Church in order to stop her from bringing forth fruit unto God. His aim was to silence the Gospel, discourage believers,

and hinder the growth of Christ's kingdom. From that time onward, the conflict between truth and deception took place within the hearts of men.

Satan, now confined to the earthly realm of human affairs, stirred persecution through false religion, corrupt governments, and worldly powers. Yet even under great opposition, the Church continued to grow, for the life within her came from God Himself. No power of darkness could destroy what was born of the Spirit, for Christ had promised that His Church would stand, and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

Summary: The Dragon's Opposition to the Church - Revelation 12:4-13

The dragon standing before the woman in Revelation 12 symbolises Satan working through earthly powers to destroy new believers - the man child - as soon as they are born again. This reveals a continual effort by the devil to oppose the growth of the true Church and to devour spiritual life at its beginning. Despite this opposition, the man child is *"caught up unto God, and to his throne,"* showing that believers are spiritually exalted and protected in Christ.

The *"heaven"* of Revelation 12 represents the spiritual realm of the Church, not the literal heaven, where believers dwell in heavenly places with Christ (**Ephesians 2:6**). The devil's wrath was stirred when he was cast down - no longer able to rule human hearts as before. In response, he persecuted the Church to hinder its fruitfulness, working through false religion and worldly systems.

Yet, the Church endured, empowered by Christ's presence. The Gospel continued to bring life, and no power of darkness could stop it, for it was born of the Spirit and upheld by God's promise.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the dragon's wrath fail to stop the Church's spiritual fruitfulness?

Personal Reflection

Have you felt discouraged when someone new to faith faced opposition? Explain what the Church's continuing fruitfulness helps you understand.

Action Step

Remember a time when fear made you silent about the truth. What will you change so that your confidence rests on Jesus Christ rather than on your own strength?

THE WAR IN HEAVEN: MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS

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Returning to **Revelation 12:7-8**, we read:

> *"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."*

Once again, this is not describing a conflict in God's celestial heaven. It is taking place in the ecclesiastical or spiritual heaven, the heavenly realm right here on earth where Christ dwells in the hearts of His people.

Paul describes this realm in **Ephesians 2:6**:

> *"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:"*

This spiritual warfare symbolises the continual struggle between truth and error, light and darkness, faith and unbelief. From the days of the early Church onward, this battle has been fought within the hearts of men and throughout the systems of religion. Throughout the book of Acts, and in other New Testament writings, we read of the persecution that came upon the saints.

History also bears witness through accounts such as Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, which record the fierce opposition and suffering endured by God's people. These accounts testify of the war in heaven, a conflict not fought with physical swords or earthly armies, but with spiritual forces contending for the souls of men. The victory is won wherever truth triumphs over falsehood and Christ reigns within the hearts of believers.

Michael Represents Christ

The name Michael means *"Who is like God?"* It comes from the Hebrew expression formed of three parts:

- MI meaning who;
- KA meaning like;
- EL meaning God.

The answer to that question is clear. Christ is the One who is like God.

Hebrews 1:1-3 explains:

> *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."*

When Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, the Lord replied in **John 14:9**:

> *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"*

Here, Christ clearly reveals His divine identity. He was not pointing to another being but declaring that the Father was revealed through Him. To see Christ is to see the visible image, the express person, of the invisible God.

Colossians 1:13-15 confirms this same truth:

> *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."*

Thus, Michael represents Jesus Christ, for His very name asks, *"Who is like God?"* and the Scriptures answer that Christ alone is like God. He is the visible manifestation of the invisible God, the One who overcomes the dragon through truth, light, and spiritual victory. This identification does not reduce Jesus Christ to a created angel.

Michael is used as a symbolic title expressing His supremacy, while the Scriptures reveal Him as the one true God manifested through genuine humanity. His authority belongs to Him, and His messengers serve under His rule.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Michael's symbolic role reveal Christ's supremacy without making Him a created angel?

Personal Reflection

What difference should Christ's own authority make to your confidence in a human messenger?

Action Step

If someone praises you for teaching or service, how will you direct the honour to Jesus Christ rather than to a human messenger?

The Meaning of "Archangel"

Jude identifies Michael as the archangel in **Jude 1**:9:

> *"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."*

The word archangel comes from the Greek word ARCHAGGELOS, which is formed from two parts:

- AGGELOS meaning messenger;
- ARCHO meaning to be first, chief, or to rule.

Who, then, is first among all, and who rules over the angels? The answer is clear. It is Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:17 tells us:

> *"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."*

1 Peter 3:22 further confirms:

> *"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."*

The same truth is seen throughout Scripture.

Psalm 8:6 declares:

> *"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."*

John wrote in **John 3:31**:

> *"He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all."*

John also wrote in **John 3:35**:

> *"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."*

The Voice of the Archangel

Paul writes in **1 Thessalonians 4:16**:

> *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"*

Here, the voice of the archangel is the voice of the Lord Himself, showing that Michael the archangel is a symbolic title of Jesus Christ in His role as the divine commander and Lord of all. This verse does not describe a future event, for Christ has already come. He returned at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit, to dwell within His people and to give life to all who believe.

His fulfilled coming at Pentecost does not end the continuing work of the Gospel. The same Lord calls people from spiritual death into life throughout the Gospel Day. The human messenger carries His Word, but Jesus Christ Himself gives life to those who hear, believe and are born again.

The voice of the archangel is therefore the voice of Christ Himself - the voice of the Gospel calling the dead to life. When the Word of God is preached in the power of the Spirit, those who hear and believe are raised from spiritual death into newness of life.

Jesus confirmed this in **John 5:25**:

> *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."*

This is the voice of the archangel, the life-giving message of Christ. Through the Gospel, the Lord calls sinners out of their graves of sin and unbelief into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

This same truth appears in **Daniel 12:1**:

> *"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."*

This prophecy speaks of the coming of the Messiah, who would stand for His people and deliver them.

Hebrews 7:25 tells us:

> *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."*

And **1 John 2:1** adds:

> *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"*

These verses reveal that Christ stands as our great Prince, Intercessor, and Deliverer. He is present and active among His people today, speaking by His Spirit, giving life through His Word, and reigning from His throne within the hearts of the redeemed.

Summary: The War in Heaven - Revelation 12:7-8

The *"war in heaven"* in Revelation 12 is not a battle in God's celestial heaven, but a spiritual conflict within the heavenly realm of the Church on earth. It symbolises the struggle between truth and deception, fought in the hearts of believers and within religious systems. Michael, whose name means *"Who is like God?"*, represents Jesus Christ, the visible image of the invisible God.

He is called the archangel, not as a created being, but as the chief messenger and divine commander, ruling over all angels and authorities. This war pictures Christ and His messengers contending with false religion and deception. The voice of the archangel is the voice of Christ through the Gospel, raising the spiritually dead to life, as confirmed by **John 5:25**.

The conflict continues as Christ delivers and intercedes for His people, standing as their Prince, Advocate, and Saviour. Through Him, the Church conquers error, and truth prevails in the spiritual realm.

The True Nature of the War in Heaven

The war in heaven between Michael and the dragon is not a literal battle taking place in the celestial heaven where God dwells. It is a symbolic portrayal of spiritual warfare occurring in the hearts and minds of men and women every day.

The Battle for Souls

It is a war for souls, a continual struggle between truth and deception, light and darkness, salvation and sin. This battle is fought between Christ and His messengers, the faithful ministers of the Gospel, and the devil and his messengers, who seek to deceive souls and turn them away from the truth.

Paul writes in **Ephesians 6:12**:

> *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

Every time the Word of God is preached, this spiritual war is fought anew. The conflict continues wherever truth challenges error and light exposes darkness. But praise be to God, the victory belongs to Christ. Those who abide in Him are made victorious through His power and grace.

Romans 8:37-39 declares:

> *"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Through Christ, every believer stands secure. No force of darkness, no deception of the enemy, and no trial of life can separate the child of God from His love. The victory is complete, the war is already won, and those who walk in the Spirit share in Christ's triumph every day.

The Opposition of the Dragon

From the very beginning, when the morning-time Church appeared clothed with the sun, there also appeared another wonder in heaven - an opposing power that rose up to challenge her divine position.

Revelation 12:3 says:

> *"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads."*

This great red dragon symbolises paganism, the spirit of false religion and worldly power that stood in direct opposition to the Church of God. It represents every earthly force that resists truth and seeks to suppress the light of the Gospel. When a person accepts Christ and allows Him to reign within the heart, the enemy of the soul always rises in opposition.

Yet through the power of Christ, the dragon has been cast down, removed from his former position as ruler over our lives. He no longer has dominion, for the Son has made us free. The only way the enemy can prevail again is if we yield to his deceit and allow him back into the place from which Christ has cast him out.

Summary: The True Nature of the War in Heaven - Revelation 12

The war in heaven is not a literal battle in the skies, but a spiritual conflict waged in the hearts and minds of people. It represents the daily struggle between truth and error, light and darkness, and salvation and sin. This battle is fought between Christ and His messengers, who preach the Gospel, and Satan and his agents, who spread deception.

As Paul explained, believers wrestle not against flesh, but against spiritual wickedness in high places (**Ephesians 6:12**). The great red dragon symbolises paganism and false religion - worldly powers that oppose the Gospel. Though the dragon resists the Church, Christ has already won the victory, casting the dragon down from rule over the believer's life.

Through the love and power of Christ, believers are more than conquerors, and nothing can separate them from Him. Victory is secured for all who walk in the Spirit and hold fast to the truth.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ's life-giving voice explain the war between truth and deception?

Personal Reflection

What does Christ's victory mean for your attitude towards a person who opposes the truth?

Action Step

Think of a person who openly opposes what you believe. How will you speak truthfully while showing patience instead of treating that person as the enemy?

VICTORY THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

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In **Revelation 12:10-11**, we read:

> *"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."*

Clearly, this is not speaking of events in the celestial heaven where God dwells. Salvation does not come to those already in God's heaven, for that is how they arrived there - by receiving salvation while still upon the earth. Furthermore, if Satan's supposed fall had taken place before the creation of Adam and Eve, there could have been no brethren in heaven for him to accuse, for mankind had not yet been created.

Neither had the blood of the Lamb been shed, for that would not occur until several thousand years later at Calvary. The end of verse 11 declares, *"they loved not their lives unto the death."* But in God's heaven there is no death.

Paul teaches this in **1 Corinthians 15:50-54**:

> *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."*

Therefore, these verses in Revelation 12 cannot refer to the literal heaven of God. They describe the spiritual realm of the Church, where believers experience the reality of salvation and triumph through the power of Christ, the blood of the Lamb, and the testimony of their faith. Every true child of God shares in this victory.

The devil has been cast down, his accusations silenced, and the redeemed now stand justified, cleansed, and victorious in Christ. The three expressions in **Revelation 12:11** must remain centred in Christ. His blood is the ground of redemption, while testimony and faithfulness reveal the life of those He has redeemed. Their witness and endurance do not add another saving work to His completed sacrifice.

Summary: Victory Through the Blood of the Lamb - Revelation 12:10-11

These verses describe spiritual victory in the Church on earth, not in God's celestial heaven. Believers overcome Satan through:

- The blood of the Lamb (Christ's atonement);
- The word of their testimony (faithful witness);

- Loving not their lives unto death (complete surrender).

The accuser is cast down when Christ reigns in believers' hearts. This is not a pre-creation fall, as salvation, brethren, and the shedding of Christ's blood all occurred in time. The reference to death proves this takes place where mortality still exists. Revelation 12 shows the Church's spiritual triumph - Satan's accusations are silenced, and the redeemed are cleansed, justified, and victorious in Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the blood of the Lamb, testimony and faithfulness belong together in spiritual victory?

Personal Reflection

What does Christ's completed sacrifice help you understand about trying to earn security through your own witness?

Action Step

Consider a situation where following Jesus Christ could cost you approval or comfort. What will you choose, trusting His completed sacrifice rather than trying to earn His acceptance?

The Symbolic Nature of Revelation Chapter 12

A close examination of Revelation chapter 12 clearly reveals that John is speaking symbolically, as he does throughout the entire book. The language of this chapter follows the same prophetic pattern of signs and symbols that reveal spiritual realities rather than literal events.

Revelation 12:17 declares:

> *"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."*

Here the dragon represents the devilish spirit or system of false religion and worldly power. The woman symbolises the Church, against whom the enemy was enraged because she was bringing truth and salvation to souls. The remnant of her seed are the converts, the spiritual offspring of the Church, those who have been born again through the Gospel.

Those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ are those who live in holiness and obedience to His Word. Their lives bear witness to the transforming power of salvation and to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the dragon symbolises the continued opposition of false religion and worldly systems against the Church of God and her offspring, the saints who walk in truth. Yet despite this war, the true Church remains victorious, for her strength lies not in human might, but in the power and authority of Jesus Christ, who has already overcome the world.

The Danger of Literalising the Dragon

Why is it that some are willing to accept that the woman and the man child are symbolic representations, yet insist on interpreting the dragon as a literal being, a fallen angel called the devil? The reason is clear. The enemy of souls seeks to blind human understanding and prevent people from grasping the true message of salvation, freedom, and victory through Christ.

If the devil can persuade people that even God's celestial angels could not resist temptation and sin - though the origin of such temptation is never explained - then he can also convince them that it is impossible for humans to live free from sin. This false idea destroys faith in the Gospel's power and undermines the message of victory through Christ. However, the Scriptures plainly teach that through faith in Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, every believer can live holy and overcoming lives.

Romans 6:14 declares:

> *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*

Through Christ, we are no longer bound by sin's power. The dragon has been cast down, truth has triumphed, and the Church of the living God continues to reign victorious in the light of His salvation.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the dragon's continued opposition not cancel the believer's freedom from sin's rule?

Personal Reflection

What does freedom from sin's rule mean for your response when obedience is costly?

Action Step

Have you thought that temptation means sin is unavoidable? What belief will you reject, and what act of obedience will express Christ's freedom in your life?

WHEN MEN WERE CALLED SATAN

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We now turn to other places in God's Word where individuals were called the devil or Satan.

In **Matthew 16:23** we read:

> *"But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."*

Was Peter actually Satan personified? Of course not.

This is the same Peter who forsook all to follow Christ (**Matthew 19:27-28**), who later wrote two books of the Bible, and for whom Jesus prayed in **Luke 22:31-32**:

> *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."*

Christ was not calling Peter the devil himself. He was rebuking the spirit or influence that spoke through him at that moment. Peter's words had resisted the purpose of God. This shows that the term Satan can be used symbolically of anyone or anything that opposes God's will.

The Influence of Satan

Peter was not Satan in person. Yet in **Matthew 16:23**, he allowed the adversary to influence his thoughts.

Jesus said in **Matthew 16:23**:

> *"But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."*

Peter, though sincere, had spoken from a carnal mind instead of a spiritual one. For a moment he echoed the enemy's thinking instead of the Lord's.

A similar case is found in **John 6:70-71**:

> *"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."*

Was Judas literally the devil? No.

Luke 22:3 explains:

> *"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve."*

This means Judas yielded himself to the spirit of deception and betrayal. Peter yielded for a moment; Judas surrendered completely. Both examples show that the words Satan or devil can describe a person acting under an evil influence, not a fallen angel.

The Dragon as a System of Deception

Judas became an instrument through which the devil worked to betray Christ. The same principle appears in Revelation 12. The dragon represents a system of deception - a worldly or religious power through which Satan works to oppose truth and hinder salvation.

The dragon was not Satan personified, any more than Peter or Judas were. The image is symbolic, showing spiritual forces working through human and institutional channels. There will never be a literal war in God's celestial heaven. Only those who overcome sin, deception, and every false spirit will enter that eternal heaven of rest prepared for the redeemed.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Peter and Judas distinguish a human instrument from the evil influence working through that person?

Personal Reflection

How should Peter's correction change your willingness to admit that sincere words can oppose God's purpose?

Action Step

When you realise your sincere words have resisted God's purpose, what will you acknowledge? How will you correct those words rather than blaming the person who challenged you?

THE DEVIL HAS NEVER BEEN IN GOD'S HEAVEN

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The devil has never been in God's heaven, nor will he ever be given access to it. Some point to **Job 1:6** or **Job 2:1** as supposed proof.

Job 1:6 says:

> *"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them."*

However, these verses do not state that this meeting took place in heaven. The same expression is used elsewhere to describe gatherings that clearly happened on earth.

For example, **Joshua 24:1** says:

> *"And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God."*

Where did the Israelites present themselves before God? In Shechem, a Levitical city near Mount Ephraim - on earth, not in heaven.

Similarly, **1 Samuel 10:19** records Samuel saying:

> *"And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands."*

The place is identified in **1 Samuel 10:17**:

> *"And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh."*

The word Mizpeh comes from the Hebrew root TSAPHAH, meaning to watch or to look out. The name therefore means *"watchtower"* or *"place of observation."* It was a place of watchfulness before God, where Israel gathered to seek His direction and hear His Word. It was an earthly meeting place, not the celestial heaven where God eternally dwells.

Thus, the scenes described in Job refer to earthly assemblies, not heavenly meetings. There is no record the devil has ever stood in God's literal presence, nor has he ever had access to His eternal dwelling.

Summary: The Devil Has Never Been in God's Heaven - Job 1:6

Scripture does not teach that the devil has ever been in God's celestial heaven. **Job 1:6** and 2:1 describe Satan appearing among the *"sons of God,"* but the Scriptures do not say this occurred in heaven. Similar language is used in verses like **Joshua 24:1** and **1 Samuel 10:17-19**, where people *"presented themselves before the Lord"* on earth.

These examples show that the phrase refers to earthly gatherings before God's presence, not entry into His eternal realm. Therefore, the devil has never stood in God's heavenly presence. All such meetings occurred in earthly contexts where God's people sought His Word and guidance.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does presenting oneself before the Lord not establish entry into God's celestial heaven?

Personal Reflection

What have Shechem and Mizpeh helped you reconsider about a familiar explanation of Job's gathering?

Action Step

If you have used Job's gathering to describe Satan in God's celestial heaven, what will you check about the earthly settings described? How will you correct any claim you cannot establish?

GUARDING AGAINST FALSE DOCTRINE

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The Need for Spiritual Discernment

The greatest safeguard against error is spiritual understanding. When we read literal meanings into Scriptures that are clearly symbolic, we change spiritual truth into natural reasoning. The book of Revelation itself warns us that its message is given through signs and symbols.

John writes in **Revelation 1:1**:

> *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."*

The word signified means to reveal by signs or symbols. This shows that the entire book must be read spiritually, not literally. The Lord revealed eternal truths through prophetic pictures so that only those led by the Spirit might understand.

The Danger of Literalism

When people take symbolic visions as literal events, they produce false doctrines that darken understanding. Literalism has caused many to believe:

- that Satan was a fallen angel who rebelled in God's heaven;
- that Christ will return again in a future physical coming;
- that the beasts, dragons, and women of Revelation describe natural creatures and events.

These ideas distract the heart from the true spiritual message. They turn the eyes outward to things seen, instead of inward to the reign of Christ within the believer.

Paul warned Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:15**:

> *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

To *"rightly divide"* means to separate spiritual meaning from literal form. Without this dividing line, tradition replaces truth.

The Scriptural Safeguards

The Bible itself provides every safeguard needed to preserve truth. When these are followed, the Church is protected from error and deception. We safeguard ourselves when we:

- Recognise the symbolic nature of prophetic language; books such as Revelation, Daniel, and Ezekiel use figures to express spiritual realities;
- Compare Scripture with Scripture; every true meaning will find its confirmation somewhere else in the Word;
- Let the Spirit interpret the Word; as Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 2:13**, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual";
- Test every doctrine by the life and character of Christ; anything that does not reveal His present reign and holiness cannot be truth;
- Hold firmly to the written Word, not tradition; only the Scriptures are the final authority for faith and understanding.

Jesus promised in **John 16:13**:

> *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."*

The Spirit of truth alone can open the symbols of prophecy, for the same Spirit who inspired the Word must also interpret it. The Spirit of truth is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, not another divine Person received after salvation. His presence belongs to the new birth, while understanding grows as His children receive and obey His Word. Spiritual discernment therefore flows from the life already within the believer.

The Key of Spiritual Discernment

Paul declares in **1 Corinthians 2:14**:

> *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

Spiritual things can only be understood by spiritual minds. Those who approach the Word through human reasoning will find only confusion, but those who yield to the indwelling Christ will see perfect harmony in all Scripture. This was the purpose for which Jesus spoke in parables - to hide truth from the natural mind and reveal it to the humble and teachable heart. As the Spirit opens our understanding, the figures of prophecy unfold to reveal Christ as the centre of every vision and symbol.

The Fruit of True Interpretation

Sound interpretation always glorifies Christ and produces holy living. False interpretation glorifies man and produces confusion, fear, or division.

Jesus gave a clear rule for testing all doctrine in **Matthew 7:16**:

> *"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"*

When truth is received spiritually, it brings peace, love, and unity among the saints. It builds faith and strengthens obedience to the Word. False teaching, however, leads to pride, contention, and separation from the life of Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do comparing Bible teachings and recognising the fruit of Christ's life protect against false interpretation?

Personal Reflection

How willing are you to receive a correction that produces humility rather than defend an impressive explanation?

Action Step

Think of a Bible explanation you are proud of defending. What will you do if careful comparison shows that it is wrong, and how will you respond humbly to the person who corrects you?

SUMMARY

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To safeguard against false doctrines and beliefs that arise from literalism, believers must:

- remember that Revelation was written in symbols;
- compare spiritual things with spiritual;
- depend upon the Spirit of truth for understanding;
- measure every doctrine by Christ's nature and the fruit it produces.

When these principles are followed, the Church remains in the light of divine revelation. The dragon of deception cannot rise again, and the saints continue to walk in victory through the Word and Spirit of Christ within.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must prophetic symbols be understood in the light of the Bible and the Spirit of truth?

Personal Reflection

What does testing prophetic symbols against the Bible mean when you feel pressure to repeat a religious claim?

Action Step

Before speaking about a prophetic symbol, what will you examine in the Bible? Identify a claim you should stop repeating until you understand it properly.

CONCLUSION: THE GREAT DRAGON AND THE WAR IN HEAVEN

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This Study Guide has brought clarity to one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible, the vision of the great dragon in Revelation 12. For many centuries, this chapter has been used to support the tradition that Satan once led a rebellion in heaven and was cast out as a fallen

angel. Yet, as we have seen through Scripture, this idea cannot stand when measured by the Word of God.

The language of Revelation is symbolic, not literal. The opening verse of the book explains that the message was *"signified"* - revealed through signs and symbols. The woman clothed with the sun represents the true Church, shining with the light of divine revelation.

The man child pictures the victorious life of Christ brought forth in His people. The dragon stands for the opposing powers through which Satan works - the proud systems of religion and empire that war against truth.

The Spiritual Nature of the Conflict

The war in heaven is therefore a spiritual conflict between light and darkness, within the hearts of men and within the visible history of the Church. The heaven from which the dragon was cast down speaks of the high realm of influence that false religion once held. The earth into which he was cast represents the carnal, worldly realm where truth has triumphed over deception. Whenever truth is revealed, error loses its place of authority.

The Casting Down of the Dragon

The casting down of the dragon symbolises the fall of pagan Rome and of every religious and political system that has opposed the Word of God. It shows that Satan's power is not sovereign, but limited to the realm of unbelief. Whenever light shines, darkness must retreat.

This principle has been repeated throughout history. Every revival of truth has cast down another stronghold of deception.

Old Testament Connection

The dragon also connects directly to Old Testament imagery. Pharaoh was called *"the great dragon"* in Ezekiel 29, a ruler who exalted himself against God and enslaved His people. This confirms that the dragon is not a personal being falling from heaven, but a symbol of proud human power used by Satan to oppose divine truth.

Victory Through the Lamb

Through Christ, every believer is given authority to overcome the dragon.

Revelation 12:11 declares:

> *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."*

Victory does not depend on human strength or tradition, but on faith in Christ's finished work. The blood represents our redemption, and the testimony represents our obedience and witness to truth. Those who hold fast to both will always triumph over deception.

The Continuing Battle

This Study Guide reminds us that the battle described in Revelation 12 is the same struggle that began in Eden and continues in every generation. It is the contest between truth and error, faith and unbelief, the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. The outcome,

however, has never been in doubt. The Lamb has already overcome, and His people share in that victory.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the dragon's defeat and the Lamb's victory bring the spiritual conflict into focus?

Personal Reflection

Which part of Christ's victory over the dragon most challenges your own fear or confidence?

Action Step

What has Christ's victory over deception shown you about one fear, belief or attitude in your life? State the change you intend to make and how His indwelling life will guide it.

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

How do Pharaoh and pagan Rome help identify the great dragon in Revelation 12? Explain the difference between Satan and the earthly powers through which he works.

2. Understanding

How do the woman and the man child portray one Church in spiritual labour and victory? Explain why the man child does not mean that the Church produced Jesus or that believers need another stage of salvation.

3. Personal Reflection

What has examining the fallen-angel belief led you to reconsider about personal responsibility? Explain how Christ's freedom helps you think about an excuse for sin.

4. Response to Truth

What does overcoming by the Lamb's blood and the word of testimony mean when faithfulness is costly? Explain why witness and obedience express Christ's saving work rather than complete it.

5. Action Step

The dragon's tail and falling stars warn about deceptive teaching. What does this mean for your own willingness to repeat a religious claim you have not checked? Explain any response you want to consider.

6. Early Response

Have you already reconsidered repeating an unchecked religious claim in the light of the dragon's tail and falling stars? If yes, explain what you did or now understand more clearly. If not, explain what you are still considering or what has made it difficult to begin.

7. Ongoing Practice

How could you keep testing teaching against the Bible while encouraging believers who face opposition? Explain why Christ's presence gives confidence without removing the need for care and fellowship.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How does Michael's symbolic role reveal Christ's supremacy without making Jesus a created angel? Use a verse to explain how His life-giving voice relates to His messengers and the work of the Gospel.

9. Living the Truth

A person joins Peter being called Satan with Job's gathering to describe Satan in God's celestial heaven. How would Peter, Judas, Shechem and Mizpeh help you give a truthful and respectful answer?

10. Final Response

How do the dragon's earthly powers, the woman and man child, the fallen stars and victory through the Lamb explain the war in heaven? Describe what has become clearer to you and any personal response you want to make.