



THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Bible Study 31

Text: Rev. 12:7-12

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1 Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀγίου καὶ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς Ἰησοῦ ἡν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ ἐπέστειλεν τὸν ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ μαρτυρῆσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀγίου καὶ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς Ἰησοῦ ὅσα εἶδεν. 3 Μακάριος ὁ ποιῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς τούτων, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ γέγραμμενη ἐν βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

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Michael Defeats the Dragon

Greek NT

La Biblia de las Américas

NRSV

NLT

7 Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος, καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπολέμησεν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ, 8 καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν οὐδὲ τόπος εὐρέθη αὐτῶν ἐπὶ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. 9 καὶ ἐβλήθη ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφης ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν.

7 Entonces hubo guerra en el cielo: Miguel y sus ángeles combatieron contra el dragón. Y el dragón y sus ángeles lucharon, 8 pero no pudieron vencer, ni se halló ya lugar para ellos en el cielo. 9 Y fue arrojado el gran dragón, la serpiente antigua que se llama el Diablo y Satanás, el cual engaña al mundo entero ; fue arrojado a la tierra y sus ángeles fueron arrojados con él.

7 And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

7 Then there was war in heaven. Michael and the angels under his command fought the dragon and his angels. 8 And the dragon lost the battle and was forced out of heaven. 9 This great dragon -- the ancient serpent called the Devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world -- was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.

10 καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγουσαν· ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγwr τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτοὺς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός. 11 καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι θανάτου. 12 διὰ τοῦτο εὐφραίνεσθε, [οἱ] οὐρανοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες. οὐαὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν, εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει.

10 Y oí una gran voz en el cielo, que decía: Ahora ha venido la salvación, el poder y el reino de nuestro Dios y la autoridad de su Cristo, porque el acusador de nuestros hermanos, el que los acusa delante de nuestro Dios día y noche, ha sido arrojado. 11 Ellos lo vencieron por medio de la sangre del Cordero y por la palabra del testimonio de ellos, y no amaron sus vidas, llegando hasta sufrir la muerte. 12 Por lo cual regocijaos, cielos y los que moráis en ellos. ¡Ay de la tierra y del mar!, porque el diablo ha descendido a vosotros con gran furor, sabiendo que tiene poco tiempo.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, "Now have come the salvation and the power and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. 12 Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

10 Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, "It has happened at last -- the salvation and power and kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ! For the Accuser has been thrown down to earth -- the one who accused our brothers and sisters before our God day and night. 11 And they have defeated him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of their testimony. And they were not afraid to die. 12 Rejoice, O heavens! And you who live in the heavens, rejoice! But terror will come on the earth and the sea. For the Devil has come down to you in great anger, and he knows that he has little time."

INTRODUCTION

In the opening scene of the cosmic battle between God and Satan we were introduced to the initial 'characters' in this drama between good and evil. The woman with child was persecuted by the old dragon. But the child born to the woman was snatched away to safety in heaven at the moment of its birth. The woman then managed to flee into the wilderness, a place of refuge and safety from the dragon for a time. God took protective care of both, the Son in heaven with Him and the mother on earth under God's care.

In vv. 7-9, scene two of the cosmic action occurs with a summation of a futile attempt of Satan to attack God from his position in the sky below the dwelling place of God. But God authorized his angel Michael to take an army of angels to fight against Satan and his cohorts in something of a battle. It doesn't last 'until the water gets hot' with Michael defeating Satan and then God banishing Satan from the sky to the earth in defeat.

The pericope concludes in vv. 10-12 with a victory proclamation from God declaring victory over evil and Satan for His people. Satan no longer has any capacity to accuse God's people of disloyalty to the One who reigns supremely on His throne in Heaven. The proclamation affirms the victory of God's people over Satan, but warns the rest of the people on earth that a wounded warrior has come into their midst with but a short time left before his absolute banishment to the lake of fire. He will take revenge on the non-believing people on earth, since God's people won victory over him in the battle led against Satan by Michael in the sky.

This depiction will then set up scene three in 12:13-17 where Satan will begin his futile conquest of the earth. It effort begins with Satan attempting to track down the woman who birthed Christ in her wilderness hiding place. She manages to elude his grip through being given the wings of the great eagle so she can flee into the wilderness (a repeat of her escape first given in 12:6 but with a different twist to it). Quickly defeated in this effort, Satan then turns to persecute "her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus" (12:17b). But first he solicits the help of the first great sea monster in this crusade against the people of God (13:1-10), and then afterwards the help of a second sea monster (13:11-18). But before much can be done against God's people, Satan comes up against the Lamb of God standing on Mt. Zion with the people of God gathered around Him already celebrating the Lamb's coming victory over Satan and all those loyal to him (14:1-5).

What we see in scene two in the defeat of Satan by Michael and his army is a resounding affirmation of

the superior power of God over evil in this world. To be sure the presentation is in apocalyptic terms as a cosmic battle, but the reality in the depiction is the ultimate helplessness of evil when it encounters a holy God operating in full force to conquer and banish evil. This lies behind the apostolic Christianity teaching of the power of love over hate, of peace over war etc.

To a readership in the first century world that became highly anxious and scared with every thunder and lightning storm that came along, such a message as 12:7-13 was a resounding declaration that God remains in control. And that the true reality is not what they had been taught while worshiping these pagan gods, but rather that the one true God has totally defeated Satan up in the sky and will subsequently defeat him on the earth. To those initial believers with Jewish synagogue connections a similar message had been drilled into them, but with the critical shift that obedience to the Torah was central to victory, and not Christ. John challenges this understanding in powerful terms here. And it is the people whose names are in the Lamb's book of life who will indeed share in both victories over the dragon. To be sure, suffering and hardship will come through persecution, but even martyrdom is no defeat, but instead a victory for God's people. Satan on earth is a wounded dragon keenly aware that his days are numbered. But the Lamb of God will ultimately defeat him and banish him and all those following him to eternal torment in the lake of fire.

In our shared commitment to Christ with these first Christian readers we come to share in this 'good news' for it applies to all of God's people and not just to a select few.

1. What did the text mean to the first readers?

Historical Aspects:

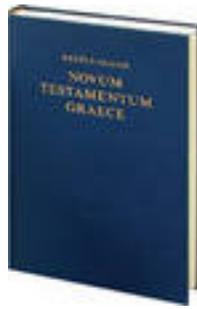
External History. In the several century long history of the hand copying of this passage, no variation surfaces that the editors of *The Greek New Testament* (UBS 4th rev. ed) considered sufficiently significant to impact the translation of the passage. Consequently not variant reading is listed in the text apparatus of this printed Greek New Testament.

Of course variations of readings do surface in the several thousand copies of this passage in manuscripts that survive and are known to exist today. The vast majority of these are listed in the text apparatus of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* (N-A 27th rev. ed). Some 22 instances where variations in the



wording of the text are listed.¹ Close examination of each of these reveals either careless or unintentional mistakes in copying. Or, in a few instances efforts to update the Greek expression account for the variations.

Consequently we can exegete the adopted reading of the text in full confidence that it represents the original wording.



Internal History. The apocalyptic nature of the text means that the events depicted are non-histor-

¹Offenbarung 12,7

* [° Düstertieck cj] (πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ is omitted)

* P⁴⁷ & M (the article τοῦ before πολεμηῆσαι is omitted)

| txt A C P 051. 1006. 1611. 1841 al

Offenbarung 12,8

* –σαν (+ πρὸς αὐτον &) P⁴⁷ & C (046). 051. 1006. 1611. 1841. 2053. 2329. 2351 M^A latt sy (the 3rd pl spelling is used rather than the 3rd sing ἴσχυσεν)

* txt A 1854 M^K bo

* ουτε 051. 2351 M^A (οὐδὲ is replaced)

*¹ αυτοις &² 051 pc sy^{ph} sams (αὐτῶν is replaced by alternative spellings)

| αυτω 1006. 1854. 2053 M^K bo; Vic

| – &^{*}

Offenbarung 12,9

* 1 2 4 & pc (the sequence of ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας is varied)

| 3 4 1 2 P⁴⁷. 115vid 1006. 1841 pc bo

* P⁴⁷ (ὁ ἀρχαῖος is omitted)

* 2 & 1854 pc bo (καὶ ὁ is replaced by dropping one or the other words)

| 1 P⁴⁷ 2329 M^K

* P⁴⁷ 2053 pc bo (αὐτοῦ before μετ' is omitted)

*¹ 051. 1854 M^A (μετ' αὐτοῦ is omitted)

Offenbarung 12,10

* σωτηρια 1854 (βασιλεία is replaced)

* σωτηρια P⁴⁷ (ἐξουσία is replaced)

*¹ κατεβλ– 051 M^A (ἐβλήθη is replaced by compound form of the verb)

* 2 –γορος P⁴⁷ & C 051 M (κατήγορ is replaced)

| txt A

*³ αυτων & C 1006. 1611. 1841. 1854. 2053. 2329. 2344. 2351 M^K (αὐτοὺς before ἐνώπιον is replaced)

| txt P⁴⁷ A 051 M^A

* 1 al sa^{mss} bo (ἡμῶν before ἡμέρας is omitted)

Offenbarung 12,11

* ουτοι & (αὐτοὶ is replaced)

* την μαρτυριαν C (τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας is replaced)

Offenbarung 12,12

* † & C P 1854. 2053. 2329 M^K (οἱ before οὐρανοὶ is omitted)

| txt A 051. 1006. 1611. 1851. 2344. 2351 M^A

* κατασκηνη– C (σκηνοῦντες is replaced by a compound form)

| κατοικ– (° & 2344) al

* τοις κατοικουσιν τ. γ. κ. τ. θ. 1 pc (τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν is replaced)

| τη γη κ. τη –σση P⁴⁷vid 1854. 2329. 2344. 2351 M^K

*¹ & (μέγαν is omitted)

[Eberhard Nestle et al., Universität Münster. Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 655–656.]

ical, even the so-called war in the sky. They represent a cosmic battle between God and Satan.

Literary Aspects:

Genre: The apocalyptic vision particularly the segment begun in 4:1 continues through this passage and thus defines the nature of the events depicted.

Rev. 12:7-12 interrupts the thought flow between vv. 1-6 and 13-18. Notice how v. 13 continues the theme of the pursuit of the woman by Satan. Some have wrongly concluded that vv. 7-12 is a later insertion into the text. But careful examination points, however, to an integral role for this passage as providing background understanding of how Satan landed on earth as a supernatural creature whose natural habitat is not the earth. By being banished from the sky to the earth he is able to continue carrying out his futile efforts to destroy the woman, and failing in this then her other children.

Verses 7-9, which is the first sub-unit of the passage, contains a 'combat myth' of a war between Satan and God with the angel Michael leading His army. Such stories were common all across the ancient world both inside Judaism and well beyond.² Frequently across

^{2c}Various versions of the combat myth were adopted from other cultures and adapted to Israelite-Jewish traditions at various times and places throughout the history of Judaism. Canaanite myths of the struggle between Baal and Yamm or Mot (understood as a Chaoskampf, a struggle against chaos) were causally connected with creation (Pss 74:12–17; 89:9–14[MT 10–15]; Job 26; cf. Ps 104:6–9; Prov 8:29; Job 38:8–11; Day, Conflict, 1–61). In Israelite poetry these conflicts were transposed into stories of Yahweh's conquest of Rahab and Leviathan (Pss 74:13–14; 89:9–10; Job 7:12). While the name "Rahab" has not been found in any extra-biblical text, the Hebrew term *לִיַּוְיָתָן* *liwyātān*, 'Leviathan,' is related to the Ugaritic term for dragon, *ltn* (see Emerton, VT 32 [1982] 327–33). In Isaiah and Ezekiel, language from the cosmic rebellion aspect of the combat myth was used metaphorically to describe Israel's historical enemies (Isa 14:10b–15; Ezek 28:1–9; cf. Day, Conflict, 88–140; Eliade, Sacred, 47–50). Egypt or its pharaoh was designated as the primordial dragon Rahab (Isa 30:7; 51:9–10; Ps 87:4) or the dragon Tannin (Ezek 29:3–5; 32:2–8; probably also Isa 27:1). The application of language drawn from the primordial cosmic rebellion myths to the historical enemies of Israel is based on the perception of the paradigmatic character of the original conflict. Israel's memory of Egypt as an oppressor, coupled with the divine delivery through water that constituted the Exodus (cf. Isa 51:9–11; Exod 15:1–8), provided the link that made it possible to describe the historical conflict in mythical terms. The sea and rivers were used as metaphors for Assyria (Isa 17:12–14; 8:5–8) and Babylon (Hab 3:8–10, 15). Babylon was also designated as a tannin or sea monster (Jer 51:34). Further, the cosmic waters are probably a designation of hostile nations in general (Pss 18:5–18; 46:3–4; 144:5–7). God was expected to do to Israel's current historical enemies what he once did in the distant past to his mythological enemies. In some proto-apocalyptic texts such as Isa 27:1, God is expected to repeat in the future his primordial victories of the past: 'In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, and he will

the Old Testament the semitic based combat stories provided Hebrew vocabulary for the OT writers to frame the historical enemies of Israel as representations of cosmic evil seeking to destroy the covenant people of God. But it is in the Jewish apocalyptic literature that this cosmic war between God and Satan takes on prominence and becomes often an interpretive method for understanding the Old Testament texts.³ In this

slay the dragon that is in the sea.’ Such texts show the way in which eschatological combat myths were developed out of protological combat myths. In Dan 7, the four beasts from the sea represent Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece; these beasts are conquered by divine intervention (v 12), with the introduction of an everlasting kingdom represented by the manlike figure in vv 13–14.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 667–668.]

³“Jewish apocalyptic literature, which depicted the end time largely in terms of conflicts and judgments, reflects a renaissance of ancient mythic narratives, of which one of the more important was the combat myth. One of the primary functions of this myth was to ascribe the experience of suffering and evil in the world to an independent cosmic adversary, Satan. Satan is the primary adversary (variously conceived as a rebel, tempter, or tyrant) in early Judaism and early Christianity; his name suggests that his primary role is that of opposition (the Hebrew term *šāṭān* means ‘adversary,’ and the Greek term *diabolos* means ‘slanderer’). He also was known by many other aliases, including Beliar, Beelzebul, Abaddon, Apollyon, Lucifer, Sammael, Semihazeh, Asael, and the devil. The author of Revelation was particularly concerned to list several of Satan’s aliases so there could be no doubt in the reader’s mind that a single familiar cosmic adversary was involved. In Rev 12:9, for example, five aliases are listed: the great dragon, the ancient serpent, the devil, Satan, and the deceiver of the whole world.

“In apocalyptic literature, imagery drawn from primordial combat stories is no longer limited to poetic metaphor but is used as a means of describing real events of the past or future. Gen 6:1–4 in particular was reinterpreted as a cosmic rebellion myth in the Enoch literature and thereafter became an essential part of early Jewish apocalyptic tradition. In 1 Enoch 6–11 (perhaps dependent on the parallel myth in Hesiod’s *Eoiae frag.* B.3–34), two hundred ‘Watchers’ (angelic beings [cf. Dan 4:17], who function as a kind of cosmic security force), led by Semihazeh, rebel against God by lusting after mortal women, who conceive giants and bring evil to the earth. Azazel (the name of the fallen angelic chief in an originally independent version; cf. Nickelsburg, *JBL* 96 [1977] 384–99), who comes to the fore as a leader of the Watchers, is bound hand and foot and thrown into a fissure in the earth where he is to be confined in darkness until the great day of judgment when he will be cast into fire (1 Enoch 10:1–6; similarities with the Prometheus myth reflected in Hesiod *Theog.* 507–616, *Works and Days* 42–105, and Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* suggest dependence on Greek sources; cf. Nickelsburg, *JBL* 96 [1977] 399–404). The initial binding of Azazel coincides with the judgment of the flood (1 Enoch 10:2). In the parallel story, Semihazeh and the rest of the Watchers are bound and confined under the hills of the earth until the day of judgment, when they will be cast into the abyss of fire (1 Enoch 10:11–14). After this, a period of perpetual righteousness and peace will dawn upon the earth (1 Enoch 10:16–11:2).

“In Jubilees the chief of the fallen angels is called Mastema (formed from the Hebrew stem *šm*, ‘animosity,’ etymologically related to *šāṭān*, ‘adversary’). The author, explicitly dependent

approach one sees the historical event in the OT text but understands the deeper spiritual cosmic conflict through the eyes of the Jewish apocalyptic interpreter of the OT text.

But what John does, although with some similarities to this Jewish apocalyptic approach, possess significant differences and reflects a very different view than any of the pagan or Jewish apocalyptic perspectives. It is not possible to tag what John does in 12:7–9 to any of the earlier viewpoints as a source. In John, the specific historical events have faded into a distant background. The focus is preeminently on the cosmic conflict. The conflict is strictly from a Christian perspective with Christ emerging as the heroic conqueror over Satan in 14:14–20. The cosmic battle is an ongoing conflict that began primordially and will only conclude at the end of human history. The cosmic war in the sky in 12:7–9 accounts for Satan operating on earth in his efforts to thwart God’s plan for humanity.

Literary Setting: As a part of John’s portrayal of the ongoing cosmic struggle between God and Satan in 12:1–14:20, this scene continues the dramatic presentation. In 12:1–6, the opening scene is presented with a major focus on the pregnant woman and Satan as the old dragon. This is introduced in the translational affirmation of 11:19. The text now under consideration in 12:7–12 continues the depiction as scene 2. This scene, however, represents a pulling back from the narrative story of Satan’s attempts to kill the woman, after failing to eliminate the child at its birth. That story is in scene one and continued in scene 3 found in

on the Enoch literature (Jub. 21:10) as well as on Genesis, narrates how God caused the sons of the Watchers to destroy each other, after which the rebellious angels themselves were bound and confined beneath the earth ‘forever,’ i.e., until the day of judgment (Jub. 5:6–11). The judgment of the Watchers apparently serves as a prototype of the coming judgment (Davenport, *Jubilees*, 73), though the phrase ‘until the day of judgment’ (Jub. 4:19; 10:17, 22) is a stereotyped expression emphasizing temporal limits rather than eschatological expectation (Davenport, *Jubilees*, 83–87). The reference to the coming judgment with ‘fire and sword’ (Jub. 9:15) suggests an eschatological combat but provides no details. After the flood the demonic offspring of the giants corrupt humanity (Jub. 10:1–3); nine-tenths are bound until the day of judgment with one-tenth active on the earth and subject to Satan, an alias of Mastema (Jub. 10:11), who is also called Beliar (in the phrase ‘sons of Beliar,’ Jub. 1:20; 16:33). In both 1 Enoch 1–36 and Jubilees, the rebellion motif is an integral part of the combat myth. In both, the rebellious angels are conquered and confined by God until the last judgment. The primary function of these myths is to account for the origin of evil in the world. There is no hint that an eschatological conflict will take place between God and his rebellious angels; eschatology, indeed, plays very little role in 1 Enoch 1–36; cf. 1 Enoch 10:12–11:2; 16:1; 19:1; 25:4 (Newsom, *CBQ* 42 [1980] 311).”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 668–669.]

A *Now has taken place the salvation and the power*
| | and
| | the kingdom of our God
| | and
| | the authority of His Christ
| /-|
| because thrown down is the accuser
| of our brothers
| before our God
| day and night.
12.11 | and

B *they have conquered him*
| because of the blood of the Lamb
| and
| because of the word of their witness
| and

C *they loved not their life until death.*
12.12 | Because of this

D *be rejoicing*
| you heavens
| and
| those in them dwelling
|

E *Woe to the earth and the sea,*
because the devil has come down to you
possessing great wrath
knowing
/-----|
that he has little opportunity.

ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν.

7 And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

First, a very strange grammar construction needs to be examined, even though it is ‘washed out’ completely in English translation. An unusual grammar construction introduces this pericope. Charted out it looks this way:

verb -- subject
infinitive with nominative case ‘subjects’

Such a pattern did not exist in ancient Greek literature. For one thing the accusative case is mandated with infinitive ‘subjects.’ But this construction is found on a

Summary of Rhetorical Structure

As the diagram makes very clear, the passage fall into two natural sub-units: statements 372-378 and # 379 with its secondary units #s A-E.

The first unit, #s 372-378, define the cosmic conflict between Michael and Satan. Then follows in #379 the heavenly celebration of the victory over Satan by Michael.

Exegesis of the Text:

Clearly the natural outline for exegeting this passage is established by the sequence set forth above. The primordial war is first described and then celebrated via divine declaration of victory over Satan.

A. War between Michael and Satan, vv. 7-9

7 Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος, καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπολέμησεν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ, 8 καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν οὐδὲ τόπος εὐρέθη αὐτῶν ἔτι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. 9 καὶ ἐβλήθη ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφις

few occasions inside the LXX as an excessively literalistic rendering of a Hebrew construction considered to be rather normal. With this understood as a Hebraism, the role of the infinitive phrase ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος is to explain the meaning of πόλεμος, *war*, which is the subject of the main clause verb. The NRSV does a pretty good job of handling this very awkward Greek construction with its “And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon.”

With the 37 uses of γίνομαι inside Revelation, and 26 uses of the Aorist 3rd singular ἐγένετο, this usage at the beginning of a main clause is unique for Revelation. It follows the OT Hebrew pattern ו... ב (אָהַר).⁴ This shows up in the synoptic gospels and Acts with some frequency but not elsewhere in the NT. For the specified event to be positioned in a definite time setting a temporal modifier such as a preposition or adverb much be attached. But here none is given in order to signal a timeless occurrence of this πόλεμος.

Instead a spatial indicator is given as ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. Given its indirect linkage to σημείον in vv. 1, 3 as also occurring ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, the same location of in the sky above earth and below Heaven is the most likely place for this war. This is particularly the case if John is making a play off the constellation of stars in the sky as a background point in the scenes of this struggle.

The two combatant leaders of this πόλεμος are specified as ὁ Μιχαὴλ and ὁ δράκων. The tradition of a war between Michael and the dragon as Satan is not common in the Jewish background. What is somewhat frequent, however, is the idea of a cosmic battle between the forces of God and of Satan at the very end as a part of the final judgment.⁵ But John projects

⁴In the OT we often find a type of construction like ו... ב (אָהַר) בְּיָמָיו, e.g., in Gn. 4:8.2 Essentially this begins with בְּיָמָיו, which is then followed by the indication of time either adverbially or in a subsidiary clause, and then the main clause is usually introduced by ו consecutive. This is not a Greek construction, and in the LXX it is mostly translated καὶ ἐγένετο.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:682.]

⁵“On a lead amulet of uncertain date discovered at Amorgos there is an adjuration for the purpose of curing a tumor, part of which reads ‘I adjure you, malign tumor, by the name of him who ... killed the twelve-headed dragon [τὰ τὸν δωδεκακέφαλον δράκοντα] by the hand of Michael and Gabriel, his holy archangels’ (T. Homolle, “Inscriptions d’Amorgos: Lames de plomb portant des imprécations,” *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 25 [1910] 430–56; the text and translation are also included in H. Lecerq, “Amulettes,” *DACL* 1:1796–99). In Revelation, of course, the dragon is depicted as having seven heads (v 3; cf. 13:1; 17:3). No other precisely similar primeval myth of the destruction of the dragon with seven heads by Michael and Gabriel is known to me, though the eschatological myth in vv 7–9 is clearly an adaptation of a variant of that myth. In 11QMelch 9–15, a text riddled with lacunae, an eschatological battle is described in which Melchizedek (apparently identical with Michael; see Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*,

this war most likely as primeval prior to creation which launches an ongoing struggle that will come to a climax at the end of human history. This may well justify translating πόλεμος as ‘battle’ as some translators prefer.

In the background here most like stands Daniel 10:13, 21 and 12:1. Chapter ten records a vision of reassurance from God to Daniel that the Persian empire under Darius the Meade (11:1) will not stand much longer. A Michael is mentioned in v. 13 as Μιχαὴλ εἷς τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν πρώτων, *one of the chief rulers*. Then in v. 21 Daniel was told, καὶ οὐθεις ἦν ὁ βοηθῶν μετ’ ἐμοῦ ὑπὲρ τούτων ἀλλ’ ἦ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἄγγελος, *and no one was the one helping with me regarding these but Michael the angel*. In 12:1, this Michael is further identified as Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ μέγας ὁ ἐστηκὼς ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ λαοῦ σου, *Michael the great angel who stands with the sons of your people*. Daniel finds in the supportive work of this Michael some encouragement that the downfall of the Babylonian empire was coming and that he would live to see it and experience the victory of God over the empire that had destroyed Judah in 583 BCE.⁶

300), allied with God’s holy ones (אֱלֹהִים וְקַדְוֵי אֱלֹהִים), i.e., angels, will judge and vanquish Belial and the spirits of his lot (רוּחַי גּוֹרָלוֹ *rûhê gôrâlô*). Since this is presented as an interpretation of Ps 82:1 (“ELOHIM [a term used of Melchizedek/Michael] has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the ELOHIM [= angels] he holds judgment”) and Ps 7:7b–8a (“Take your seat on high. EL [= Melchizedek/Michael] judges the peoples”), this appears to be an event that occurs in heaven and thus corresponds to the eschatological events narrated in Rev 12:7–9. There are Jewish texts in which Satan (also called Beliar and Mastema) is thought to accuse Israelites before God (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6; Jub. 1:20; 17:15–16; 48:15–18; 1 Enoch 40:7 [here the accusers are ‘satans’]) and so is present in heaven. There were also traditions that an angelic host would defeat Satan and his spirits on the day of judgment (T. Levi 3:3; 1QM 15–19, where the eschatological battle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness is joined by Michael [1QM 17:7] and his hosts and Belial and his hosts; see 4Q491 frag. 11, the “Son of Michael”), or simply a general statement that Satan would be defeated without specifying precisely how (1 Enoch 10:6; T. Jud. 25:3; Apoc. Ezra 4:43), or that Christ would defeat Satan (the Christian interpolations in T. Levi 18:12; T. Sim. 6:6; T. Dan 5:10–11; T. Zeb. 9:8).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 692–693.]

⁶“The opening verse [10:1] summarizes chaps. 10–12 as a whole, introducing the motifs of the reliability of the revelation Daniel is given, the conflicts chap. 11 describes, and the understanding Daniel is given. The date ‘in the third year of Cyrus’ fits the pattern of other Danielic dates (see 1:1 Comment, 2:1 Comment) but it may be significant in its own right: it takes us beyond the first year of Cyrus mentioned in 1:21, which should herald the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s seventy-years prophecy and the restoration of the temple as the exiles are free to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1–3), into and apparently beyond ‘the second year of their arrival’ (Ezra 3:8), when they were able to begin the restoration but were soon caused to give up (Ezra 4:24). The disappointment associated with the beginning of Israel’s restoration from exile is coun-

Daniel's vision may have included seeing Michael and Gabriel standing with the mysterious man who is the center of the vision.⁷ And in a pattern so typical in the ancient world, battles on earth are understood to reflect cosmic struggles and warfare.⁸

Thus although this 'war' between Michael and Satan is a primeval struggle initially, its ongoing as-

tered by a promise of final restoration (12:1–3) (Plöger).” [John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 290.]

⁷“It is not clear how many supernatural beings are involved in the scene. In 12:5–6 there are two others apart from the man in linen, and so it may also be here, but the seer does not make it explicit. The man in linen (vv 5–6) may be Michael and the subsequent speaker Gabriel, though — if so — it is odd that the names are not actually applied to the figures, nor are the links noted (contrast 9:21); nor does the reference to Michael in 11:1 mention the fact that he is present. The man in linen is described in more awesome terms than have been used of Gabriel previously, like those used of God himself in Ezek 1. But they need not indicate that the person is God, or represents God (like the messenger of Yahweh, e.g., Gen 16), only that the passages have this literary connection (Heaton; contrast, e.g., H. Haag, TWAT “... בן-אדם”; R. D. Rowe, “Is Daniel’s ‘Son of Man’ Messianic?” in Christ the Lord FS D. Guthrie, ed. H. H. Rowdon [Leicester/Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1982] 90–91). He might be the one who spoke with Gabriel in 8:16 (Bampfylde, JSJ 14 [1983] 129–30). The figure in v 11 has the task of speaking, not acting, and the description of his role in v 12 corresponds to that of Gabriel in 9:20–23; so also v 14. Whether or not he is Gabriel, he has a role like Gabriel’s. There is no reason to link any of the figures here specifically with the humanlike figure of 7:13. Like chap. 7, the scene has the allusiveness that often characterizes vision reports and the visionary experience itself, and exegesis must preserve this allusiveness. It heightens the awesomeness of what is described.” [John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 291.]

⁸“Like other ancient Near Eastern writings, the OT assumes that the results of battles on earth reflect the involvement of heaven. Usually the picture is of heavenly forces aiding Israel and enabling them to win against otherwise overwhelming earthly forces. Yahweh and his armies fight with Israel’s armies: hence Israel’s victories against impossible odds (Num 10:35–36; Deut 33:2–3; Judg 5:19–20; cf. 1QM 12; Hab 3; Ps 68). There is a certain parallel between the structure of heaven as Canaanite myths see it and as the OT sees it, but in the latter the ‘gods’ are merely the servants of the one Yahweh. The exodus story gives Yahweh’s messenger a key role regarding Israel’s victorious progress (Exod 14:19; 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2); the conquest story pictures the involvement of the commander of Yahweh’s armies (Josh 5:14–15). Where Israel loses, the presupposition will be that he fights against them. Other heavenly powers still act as his servants (cf. Deut 29:26; 32:8 4QDeut, LXX; Sir 17:17). A few passages, however, suggest that there are heavenly armies that oppose Yahweh, so that earthly battles reflect battles in heaven; whichever side wins in heaven, its equivalent wins on earth. Heavenly beings who oppose Yahweh are destined for punishment (Isa 24:21; Ezek 28, if the prince of Tyre is the heavenly figure who is identified with Tyre; Ps 82, if the “gods” are supernatural beings; 1 Enoch 89–90; 2 Macc 5).” [John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 291–292.]

pects reflect the struggles between God’s people and the forces of evil in this world. Behind evil temptation stands a Satan attempting to thwart God. In every evil action in our world stands this cosmic struggle to prevent God from achieving His will in this world.

This struggle is not just between two figures: Michael and Satan. It encompasses *οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ*, his angels, for both central figures.⁹ But Michael as leader of an army of angels is unique to Rev. 12, and is not present in texts beyond this one in Jewish writings.¹⁰

⁹“The conception of a heavenly army of angels (Mach, Engel-glaubens, 241–55) occurs frequently in the OT, early Judaism, and early Christianity. According to an ancient Israelite conception, the army of Israel could be aided by a heavenly army (Josh 5:14; 2 Kgs 6:17; Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; 2 Macc 2:21; 3:25–26; 5:2–4; 8:19–20; 11:6; 15:22–23; 3 Macc 6:18–21; 1QM 9:5–6; 11:11–13). In the Greek world there are stories about deities who miraculously protect their temples or cities (Herodotus 8.37–39; Diodorus 11:14.3–4; Pausanias 10.23.1–10; Doran, Temple Propaganda, 47–52). The conception of a heavenly host occurs in Luke 2:13 (see Acts 7:42), a variant of the LXX expression στρατιά τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ‘army of heaven’ (3 Kgdms 22:19; 2 Esdr 19:6[MT Neh 9:6]; Jer 19:13; Hos 13:4; 2 Chr 33:3, 5; Neh 9:6). In Matt 26:53, Jesus refers to ‘twelve legions of angels,’ a conception based on the analogy of the organization of the Roman army as the Latin loanword ‘legion’ indicates (see 2 Kgs 6:17). This image of a ‘legion’ of angels is unique to the NT but occurs occasionally in later rabbinic literature (Str-B, 1:997). The conception of Michael ‘and his angels’ has a parallel in the coming of the Son of man ‘with his angels’ (Matt 16:27; cf. 24:31; Mark 8:38).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 693.]

¹⁰“Michael, a major angelic figure in early Judaism, is mentioned just three times in the OT (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1), twice in the NT (Jude 9; Rev 12:7), and once in the Apostolic Fathers (Hermas Sim. 8.3.3). In Dan 10:13–21, Gabriel (the only other angel specifically named in the OT, though here it is not absolutely certain that he is the angel referred to) claims that he and ‘the prince of the kingdom of Persia’ (i.e., an angel representing Persia) were in conflict for twenty-one days when he was relieved by Michael. In Dan 10:20, the ‘prince of Persia’ and the ‘prince of Greece’ are mentioned, and again these are clearly national angels of Persia and Greece. Beginning with Daniel, Michael is considered ‘the great prince [Theod ἄρχων] who has charge of your people [i.e., ‘Israel’]’ (Dan 12:1; see 1 Enoch 20:5) or ‘the ruler [ἄρχοντα] of the Jewish people’ (Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita De caelesti hierarchia 9.2). Though this appears to be a war fought by angels, nothing is mentioned about any angelic armies they might lead. Jude 9 alludes to the story of the archangel Michael disputing with Satan over the body of Moses from the lost ending of the Testament of Moses (Bauckham, Jude, 2 Peter, 65–76). This is related to Rev 12:7–9 in that Michael and Satan are presented as in conflict, though this cannot be described as a war, nor are they backed up by opposing armies. Michael is the only angel specifically named in Revelation (and only here in 12:7–9), and this passage is the earliest evidence that Christians held the view that Michael held the first position in an angelic hierarchy. Since he is depicted in Rev 12:7–9 as leading an angelic host, he is not simply an archangel but an ἀρχιστράτηγος, ‘field marshall,’ in function if not in title; see the evidence for this title in early Jewish texts below. In

Beyond Jude 9 (Ὁ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος,), only in the Jewish writings outside the Bible is Michael ever identified as an ἀρχάγγελος, *archangel*. Additionally the label ἀρχιστράτηγος, *commander-in-chief*, is used in some of the extra-biblical literature as well.¹¹ When looking only

Apoc. Paul 14, evil angels fight with good angels to prevent a sinless soul from entering heaven; when the soul does enter heaven, ‘Michael and all the host of angels [Michael et omnis exercitus angelorum]’ worship God. God then turns the soul that has not sinned over to Michael to lead it into the paradise of jubilation to await the resurrection. In Apoc. Paul 43, Michael is again depicted as descending from heaven ‘and with him the whole host of angels [Michael cum omne exercitu angelorum].’ In the fourth-century Gos. Bartholomew 4.29 (Hennecke-Schneemelcher, NTA 1:497), Michael is called “the captain of the hosts above.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 693–694.

¹¹“In early Jewish sources, Michael is called an ἀρχάγγελος or ‘archangel’ (Sync 1 Enoch 9:1 [Black, *Apocalypsis*, 23]; T. Abr. [Rec. A] 1:4, 6; 10:1; 20:10; this title is not linked to Michael in Rec. B, with the exception of the prescript [Denis, *Concordance*, 830]; Adam and Eve 22:1; 37:4; 38:1; 40:1; Paral. Jer. 9:5; 3 Apoc. Bar. [Gk.] 11:8; Jude 9; see 4 Bar. 9:5; Apoc. Sedr. 14:1; T. Mos. 9:1 [Denis, *Fragmenta*, 64, 67; lost source for Jude 9; Jub. 10:7 frag. [Denis, *Fragmenta*, 86]). Michael is also called an ἀρχιστράτηγος, ‘commander-in-chief’ (T. Abr. [Rec. A] 1:4; 2:2; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1; 7:11; 9:8; 10:12; 14:5, 12; 15:1; 19:4 [this title is uniformly absent from Rec. B]; 3 Apoc. Bar. [Gk.] 11:4, 7, 8; Gk. Ap. Ezra 4:24), Greek equivalent for the title ‘the great prince’ (MT הַשָּׂר הַגָּדוֹל *hasšar haggādōl*; LXX ὁ ἄρχων ὁ μέγας) in Dan 12:1 (and rabbinic literature, though Michael is not mentioned in the Mishna; see b. Hag. 12b; b. Menah. 110a). In the LXX, the title ἀρχιστράτηγος is used twice of a heavenly being (Josh 5:14; Dan 8:11). Michael is usually associated in early Jewish tradition with a restricted group of heavenly beings called ‘angels of the presence,’ variously identified as a group of four archangels (1 Enoch 9:1; 40:9; 54:6; 71:8, 9, 13; Apoc. Mos. 40:3; Sib. Or. 2.215; Num. Rab. 2:10; Pesiq. R. 46; Pirque R. El. 4; see Lueken, *Michael*, 34–35; Bousset-Gressmann, *Religion des Judentums*, 326–27; see *Epistula Apostolorum* 13) or seven archangels (Tob 12:15; 1 Enoch 20:1–7; see Lueken, *Michael*, 36–37; Bousset-Gressmann, *Religion des Judentums*, 325–36), a number conforming to the seven planets. These angels are often thought to supervise certain activities: Raphael superintends healing, Gabriel supervises warfare, and Michael attends to the prayers and supplications of people (Origen *De principiis* 1.8.1). He is sometimes singled out as the foremost angel, as in T. Abr. [Rec. B] 4:5 (MS B), ‘The same Michael is the first of the angels.’ Michael is involved in the eschatological struggle of the sons of light against the sons of darkness. Though Michael is mentioned just three times in the War Scroll (1QM 9:15–16; 17:6–8), it is probable that he had a greater role in the angelology of the Qumran community than might first appear. The ethical dualism of Qumran saw people as ultimately influenced by two conflicting supernatural beings (1QS 3:18–19), the רוּחַ הַאֱמֶת *rūah ha-ēmet*, “Spirit of Truth,” and the רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם *rūah hā-āwel*, “Spirit of Evil.” The designation מַלְאָכַי הַחֹשֶׁק *mal.ak hōišek*, ‘Angel of Darkness,’ undoubtedly refers to Belial, i.e., Satan (1QS 1:17–18; 3:20–21; CD 5:18–19), while the שָׂר אֹרֵי הַלְוִי *šar ḥōrīm*, ‘Prince of Lights’ (1QS 3:20; CD 5:18), or שָׂר מְאֹרֵי הַלְוִי *šar mā.ōr*, ‘Prince of Light’ (1QM 13:10), or ‘Angel of Truth’ (1QS 3:24), refers to Michael; both have the same title שָׂר *šar*, ‘prince,’ in 1QS 3:20 and Dan 12:1 (Betz, *Paraklet*, 66–69; Leaney, *Rule*, 43–44, 148). Michael and Melchizedek

to the biblical references to Michael (Rev. 12:7; Jude 9; Dan. 13:13, 21; 12:1) there is not much to be learned about him beyond him being an angelic creature serving God. The completely speculative materials outside the Bible present a variety of pictures, sometimes elaborate and often very contradictory of one another, as Aune’s summation in the previous footnote illustrates. Only in this one instance of 12:7–9 is he linked to an angelic army in a primeval battle. In the subsequent battles at the end of the age, it is uniformly Christ who leads the heavenly host against the devil and his forces (Rev. 14:10; 19:19, 20:8). In 2 Thess. 1:7, Christ’s return is pictured as ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ μετ’ ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, *in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His powerful angels*. This is linked directly in vv. 8–10 with the final day of judgment as the center piece of Christ’s return.

Here in 12:7 Michael and his angel forces come out of heaven to do battle with the dragon in the sky who accommodates him by attacking: καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπολέμησεν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ, *and the dragon attacked along with his angels*.

But this is a fatal mistake by the dragon because καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν οὐδὲ τόπος εὐρέθη αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, *and he was not strong enough nor was place found for him still in the sky*. His military might and skills proved woefully inferior to those of Michael. Interestingly on the day of the great white throne judgment οὐ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ **τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς**, from whose face the earth and heaven fled and **place was not found for them** (20:11). Location in the sky is location in the general proximity of Heaven but is different from it since the Presence of God covers all of creation and Heaven itself.¹² In the Theoditian text version of Daniel at 2:35

are probably identified in 4Q>Amram 3:2 (Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 71–74). Both the Angel of Light (Michael) and Belial have angelic armies at their disposal (1QM 13:10–12). Michael is presented in Dan 10:21 and Jude 9 as one who battles the forces of evil. He is ‘the holder of the keys of the kingdom’ (Slavonic 3 Apoc. Bar. 11:2) and is identified as the one who conveys the prayers of people to God (Slavonic 3 Apoc. Bar. 11:4). He is designated as ‘the great prince’ (Dan 12:1; b. Hag. 12b; b. Menah. 1; b. Zebah 62a), the commander-in-chief of the angelic forces (Dan 10:13, 21; 2 Enoch 22:6; 33:10 [Rec. A]; T. Abr. [Rec. A, Rec. B] 14; 3 Apoc. Bar. [Gk.] 11:4, 6).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 694–695.]

¹²“A very similar phrase occurs in Rev 20:11, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς, ‘but there was no place for them,’ which is a verbatim allusion to Theod Dan 2:35; in both places the pronoun appears to indicate possession. A parallel to this verse occurs in 1 Clem. 9:3, where it is said of Enoch καὶ οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῦ θάνατος, literally ‘and his death was not found,’ i.e., ‘and his death did not occur’ or ‘he did not die.’ Since the verb ἰσχύειν can be translated into Latin as *imperium habere*, ‘to have imperium’ (Mason, *Greek Terms*,

occurs καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς which is identical to 20:11 and similar to 12:8.¹³

The consequence of being defeated by Michael is καὶ ἐβλήθη ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὄλην, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν, and was cast out the dragon, the great one, the ancient serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, the one who deceives the entire inhabited earth, he was cast out on to the earth, and his angels with him were cast out. Notice the threefold ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθη, and ἐβλήθησαν. Satan and his angels were banished from any location close to the heavenly Presence of God. The so-called 'divine passage' is being used here signaling that God was the One who banished Satan and his angels.

The idea of Satan being banished from the presence of God is clouded in the murky waters of extra biblical Jewish speculation outside the Bible.¹⁴ The 58), this may well be a parody of what will happen to the Roman emperor." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 695.]

¹³**Theod. Dan. 2:35.** τότε ἐλεπτόνθησαν εἰς ἀπαξ τὸ ὄστρακον, ὁ σίδηρος, ὁ χαλκός, ὁ ἄργυρος, ὁ χρυσὸς καὶ ἐγένετο ὡσεὶ κονιορτὸς ἀπὸ ἄλωνος θερινῆς· καὶ ἐξῆρε τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ πνεύματος, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς· καὶ ὁ λίθος ὁ πατάξας τὴν εἰκόνα ἐγενήθη ὄρος μέγα καὶ ἐπλήρωσε πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν. [Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco*, vol. XVI, 2, *Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis Editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 243.]

Standard LXX text: τότε λεπτά ἐγένετο ἅμα ὁ σίδηρος καὶ τὸ ὄστρακον καὶ ὁ χαλκός καὶ ὁ ἄργυρος καὶ τὸ χρυσίον καὶ ἐγένετο ὡσεὶ λεπτότερον ἀχρόου ἐν ἄλωνι, καὶ ἐρρίπισεν αὐτὰ ὁ ἄνεμος ὥστε μηδὲν καταλιφθῆναι ἐξ αὐτῶν· καὶ ὁ λίθος ὁ πατάξας τὴν εἰκόνα ἐγένετο ὄρος μέγα καὶ ἐπάταξε πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.† [Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta: SESB Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Da 2:35.]

¹⁴"The myth of the heavenly battle between Michael and Satan resulting in the defeat and expulsion of Satan and his angels from heaven (vv 7–9) is narrated as an eschatological event in 12:9 (as it is in Luke 10:18; cf. the language of John 12:31), but as an exclusively primordial or protological event in early Jewish and Islamic literature, a motif based on Isa 14:12–15. It is of course possible that the tradition of Satan's presence before the heavenly throne of God as an adversary of the righteous on earth (see Comment on 12:10) led to a reinterpretation of the tradition of his primordial expulsion from heaven, resulting in a tale of his eschatological expulsion (Bousset [1906] 351).

"In *Adam and Eve* 12–16 (esp. 13:1; 16:2), there is a dialogue between Satan and Adam in which the former blames the latter for his expulsion from heaven (see also Gos. Bartholomew 52–55; Qu.ran 7.11–17: Iblīs [= Satan] is expelled from heaven for not prostrating himself before Adam). This myth is frequently reiterated in the Qu.ran (see 2.34; 15.28–39; 17.61–64; 18.50; 20.116–17; 38.71–83). Related to these traditions of the protological expulsion of Satan from heaven is the soliloquy that God gives over Adam's corpse in Apoc. Moses 39 in which he says that Adam will be established on the throne of his seducer (Satan), who will be cast down to the earth so that Adam might be seated above him.

picture of a falling star as an allusion to Satan seems to play off Isaiah 14:12–15, although the star falls not to the earth but to Sheol underneath the earth. This seems to lie behind Jesus' statement in Luke 10:18.¹⁵ Here in 12:9 Satan is banished to the earth. In John 12:31, Jesus describes Satan as the ruler of this world who will be driven out of the earth: νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, νῦν ὁ ἀρχῶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω. What John clearly affirms in Rev. 12:9 is that Satan has lost his war with God and has been banished to the earth where he has the ability to continue his struggle by attacking God's people on earth.

To make absolutely clear the identity of the dragon, ὁ δράκων, John stacks a series of labels on him to clearly identify him: ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν

This Greek redaction of *Adam and Eve* 47 may refer to the eschatological expulsion of Satan from heaven. The juxtaposition of the two motifs of pride and expulsion found in Isa 14:12–15 also occurs in the Gos. Bartholomew 52–55 (NTA 1:499–500) and in the longer text of the Jewish apocalypse of 2 Enoch 29:4–5 (Bousset [1906] 350–51), perhaps from the late first century A.D. The image of the dragon thrown down to earth has a close parallel in the only vision of Jesus reported in the synoptic Gospels: "And he said to them [seventy disciples], 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven'" (Luke 10:18). This tradition, in turn, has a verbal parallel in John 12:31, 'Now the ruler of this world has been cast out [ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω]' (see 16:11). Yet here Satan has been cast not out of heaven but out of the earth; i.e., he has been defeated by Jesus. The variant reading, βληθήσεται κάτω, 'has been cast down' (Codex Q and some versal evidence: it syrs copsa), makes expulsion from heaven explicit but has no claim to originality and may well have been influenced by Rev 12:9–10, 13 (see Schnackenburg, John 2:392). As the text in John 12:31 stands, it may mean that Satan is now driven from the world, i.e., has finally been judged and conquered by the crucifixion of Jesus (John 12:32; 16:11). An analogous vision is reported by John in Rev 9:1, 'I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth,' though in this case the star cannot represent Satan since it apparently functions as a messenger of God in unleashing the plague of locusts upon the earth (see Comment on 9:1). The Jewish character of vv 7–9 is suggested by the fact that Michael (the guardian angel of Israel; see Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; 1QM 17:4ff.; 3 Enoch 44:10), rather than the Messiah, is the one who defeats Satan. John clearly wants to identify the dragon with Satan, for he piles up various names for Satan in v 9, including dragon, ancient serpent, Devil, and Satan. The expulsion of Satan is also mentioned in Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* 4.40.3. Apollodorus 1.6.3 preserves the myth of Typhon's attempted assault on heaven in which he was attacked by Zeus when he followed the gods to Egypt. In Apoc. Abr. 23, the dragon (with six pairs of wings and human hands and feet) is the instrument of Azazel, or Satan, in the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 695–696.]

¹⁵**Luke 10:18.** εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς· ἐθεώρουν τὸν σατανᾶν ὡς ἀστραπὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεσόντα.

18 He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.

οἰκουμένην ὄλην, [the great one, the ancient serpent, the one being called Devil and Satan, the one deceiving all the inhabitants of the earth](#). These are the traditional labels found both in the OT and mostly in the Jewish traditional materials outside the Bible. As ὁ μέγας, he can be understood as extraordinarily large, or more likely as a significant personage. With ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἄρχαῖος, the old serpent, he is identified here with the snake who tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden.¹⁶ This is the only refer-

¹⁶“This phrase begins a short excursus in which the aliases of the dragon are listed. While the woman and the child are neither named nor identified, the author-editor is careful to identify the dragon by listing his traditional names and designations in v 9. The phrase נחש הקדמון *nāḥāiṣ haqqaddēmōnī*, ‘the ancient serpent,’ as a designation of Satan occurs occasionally in rabbinic literature (t. Soṭa 4.17 [var. lect. in MSS. W and A; see Der Tosefta-Traktat Soṭa, ed. H. Bietenhard, 289]; Sipre Deut. § 323 on 32:33 [S. Horowitz and L. Finkelstein, eds., *Sifre on Deuteronomy* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969) p. 374,11]; b. Ber. 9b; Gen. Rab. 22:12 on Gen 4:15; Tanchuma מצורע *mēšōrā*. § 7 [S. Buber, ed., *Midrash Tanḥuma*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Eshkol, 1990) p. 24a,3]; see also Str-B, 3:814; Der Tosefta-Traktat Soṭa, ed. H. Bietenhard, 82 n. 151).

Rev 12:9 provides the only explicit biblical identification of Satan with the serpent who tempted Eve in Gen 3:1–7. However, such an identification may be presupposed in several other NT passages, such as in Rom 16:20, if the phrase ‘crush Satan under your feet’ alludes to the ‘protevangelium’ in Gen 3:15, and perhaps also in Luke 10:19, which links the fall of Satan (seen by Jesus in the vision reported in 10:18) with the ability to tread on serpents (and scorpions). In 2 Cor 11:3, Paul mentions that the serpent deceived Eve, and in 2 Cor 11:14 he observes that ‘Satan disguises himself as an angel of light’ (these two statements may be connected in view of Apoc. Moses 17:1, where Satan came in the form of an angel to tempt Eve, apparently using the serpent as a kind of ventriloquist’s dummy). Wis 2:24 presupposes the association or identity of the serpent with the devil, and the identity of Satan with the serpent is also presupposed in Adam and Eve 16:3. In 3 Apoc. Bar. 9:7, it is Sammael (Syriac Satanel) who took the serpent as a garment. In the Latin version of Origen’s *De principiis* 3.2.1, Michael the archangel reportedly says that the serpent was inspired by the devil and therefore caused Adam and Eve to sin. That John piles up synonyms for Satan suggests that he is consciously attempting to expose the real role of this antagonist of God throughout cosmic and human history. Isa 27:1 is an important OT passage in which imagery drawn from the primordial combat myth is given an eschatological application (Day, *Conflict*, 142–51). In this passage a single monster is described using three separate designations, Leviathan the twisting serpent, Leviathan the crooked serpent, and the dragon (a fact made evident by parallels in Ugaritic texts; see Day, *Conflict*, 142). Some have taken these three terms to refer to three constellations, Serpens, Draco, and Hydra (C. F. Burney, “The Three Serpents of Isaiah XXXVII 1,” *JTS* 11 [1910] 443–47). Prior to Rev 12:9, an explicit identification of Satan with the serpent in Eden is hinted at in Apoc. Moses 16:4–5 (Charlesworth, *OTP* 2:277), where the serpent becomes the spokesperson for the devil. In Adam and Eve 9:1–11:3, Satan (later referred to as the devil) transforms himself into a luminous angel and deceives Eve a second time. At least in these related compositions, deriving from perhaps the first century A.D., it is clear that Satan is the real tempter of Eve. Wis 2:24 implies the connection by claiming that

ence inside the entire Bible explicitly linking the snake in the Garden to Satan. In the phrase ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, John links Satan and Devil together with an emphasis on his role as deceiver and slanderer.¹⁷ The final label ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὄλην stresses this deceptive role of Satan upon all the inhabitants of the world, as does the same expression in 20:10, ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοῦς. This stacking up of labels is reminiscent of Isaiah 27:1.¹⁸

Clearly with a maize of ideas and labels floating around concerning Satan in John’s late first century world, he seeks to eliminate any doubt about who the

‘by the envy of the devil death entered into the world.’ In 1 Enoch 69:6, Gadreel, one of the lesser fallen angels, is credited with leading Eve astray, implying the identity of the serpent with a fallen angel. In PGM IV.1636, Helios is addressed as ‘the great Serpent, leader of all’ (Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri* 60). [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 696–697.]

¹⁷“The phrase ὁ καλούμενος is a typical formula used for introducing an alternate name, perhaps more familiar to the hearer or reader. An alternative name or alias was frequently introduced by the phrase ὁ καὶ, or *qui et*, used after the first century B.C. (Acts 13:9; Ant. 1.240; 12.285; 13.320; J. W. 1.99; 2.530; Ign. Eph. inscr.; Magn. inscr.), or other expressions such as ὁ (ἐπι)καλούμενος, or ὁ λεγόμενος (Jos. J. W. 2.167; Acts 1:23; 4:36; 10:5, 18, 32; 11:13; 12:12, 25; 13:1; 15:22, 37); see M. Lambertz, “Zur Ausbreitung des Supernomen oder Signum im römischen Reiche,” *Glotta* 4 (1912) 78–143; 5 (1914) 99–170. In the Coptic-Gnostic tractate *Testim. Truth* 47.5–6, a revisionist version of Gen 3, it is said that God ‘cursed the serpent and called him Devil.’ Satan is mentioned in just three OT books (1 Chr 21:1; Job 1:6, 9, 12; 2:3, 4, 6, 7; Zech 3:1, 2), meaning ‘accuser,’ ‘adversary.’ The name ‘Satan’ also occurs in early Jewish literature (T. Gad 4:7; T. Ash. 6:4; T. Dan 3:6; 5:5–6; 6:1), but it never occurs in the literature from Qumran, where the name ‘Beliar’ is preferred. Yet in the LXX, the Hebrew term שָׂטָן *śātān* is translated by (ὁ) διάβολος in 1 Chronicles, Job, and Zechariah, meaning ‘one who separates,’ ‘the seducer,’ ‘the enemy.’ The devil is called Sotona because his original name was Satanail, and he is the one who seduced Eve in the Garden (2 Enoch [Rec. J] 31:6). The designation ‘devil’ occurs in some early Jewish texts (T. Naph. 3:1; 8:4, 6; T. Gad 5:2; T. Ash. 1:8–9; 3:2), thirty-six times in the NT (‘Satan’ occurs thirty-four times), and becomes the standard designation for Satan in the Apostolic Fathers, where the term ‘Satan’ itself occurs just three times (Barn. 18:1; Ign. Eph. 13:1; Pol. Phil. 7:1, always with the article). The articular form of διάβολος occurs twenty-four times (Ign. Eph. 10:3; Trall. 8:1; Rom. 5:3; Smyrn. 9:1; Pol. Phil. 7:1; 2 Clem. 5:3; Mart. Pol. 3:1; Hermas Mand. 4.3.4, 6; 5.1.3; 7.2, 3; 9.9, 11; 11.3, 17; 12.2.2; 12.4.6, 7; 12.5.1; 12.6.1, 2, 4; Sim. 8.3.6; see G. J. M. Bartelink, *Lexicologisch-semantische Studie over de Taal van de Apostolische Vaders* [Utrecht: Beyers, n.d.] 98–99.)” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 697–698.]

¹⁸**Isaiah 27:1.** ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκεῖνη ἐπάξει ὁ θεὸς τὴν μάχαιραν τὴν ἀγίαν καὶ τὴν μεγάλην καὶ τὴν ἰσχυρὰν ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν φεύγοντα, ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν σκολιὸν καὶ ἀνελεῖ τὸν δράκοντα.

[On that day the Lord with his cruel and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea.](#)

old dragon is.

B. Heavenly declaration of victory over Satan, vv. 10-12

10 καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγουσαν· ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγωρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτοὺς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός. 11 καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι θανάτου. 12 διὰ τοῦτο εὐφραίνεσθε, [οἱ] οὐρανοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες. οὐαὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν, εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. 12 Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

The formal introduction of the declaration of victory comes from a heavenly voice: καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγουσαν, and I heard a loud voice in heaven saying. Modern commentators seems largely confused by this genre signal because it utilizes forms used in other ways in Revelation.¹⁹ Note the pattern of the **core expression** ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην and equivalent variations: 1:6; 4:1; 6:6; 9:13; **10:4, 8; 11:12; 12:10; 14:2, 13**; 16:1; 21:3. It is a divine call for celebration in heaven of the victory over Satan. Instead of being ‘out of place,’ it is the exactly appropriate way to declare victory over an enemy. God sitting on His throne declares the victory and calls for celebration.

The [poetic structure](#) of the declaration interprets the deeper significance of this victory and its implications for human history.

The first strophe in v. 10b asserts that which now becomes possible for sinful humanity. Note how it is

¹⁹“καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγουσαν, ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘The victory and the power and the kingship of our God / and the authority of his Messiah have now occurred.’” On the motif of the unidentified sound or voice, see Comment on 10:4. In this instance an individual voice seems less likely or appropriate than the sound of a large group (cf. 11:15; 19:1; Jöms, *Evangelium*, 110).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 699.]

structured:

A	ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία
	καὶ
	ἡ δύναμις
	καὶ
	ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν
	καὶ
	ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ,
	ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγωρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν,
	ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτοὺς
	ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ
	ἡμῶν
	ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός.

Thus from John’s prospective (ἄρτι) four realities have come into existence out of this victory. First, ἡ σωτηρία is now possible. The core idea of ‘deliverance’ is most likely the foundational meaning of ἡ σωτηρία. Humanity that can be enslaved to Satan’s work on the earth can now be liberated from that enslavement. Michael’s victory over Satan set this in movement and provides the foundation for it being put into place through the redeeming work of Christ on the cross.

Second, ἡ δύναμις now becomes available to redeemed humanity. Michael’s victory demonstrated the superiority of God’s δύναμις over that of Satan, and now becomes accessible to redeemed humanity through Christ.

Third, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν becomes affirmed through Michael’s victory and that reign of God becomes accessible to redeemed humanity and will become supreme at the very end.

Fourth, ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ is asserted by Michael’s victory and that power of Christ is realized in the death of the Lamb who then was exalted to the right hand of the Father.

This victory of Michael affirms and makes possible these marvelous triumphs over evil. And upon what basis is this so? The ὅτι clause gives the reason / basis for this affirmation of triumph: ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγωρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτοὺς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, because cast out is the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night. This is clearly an allusion to the defeat of Satan in vv. 7-9.²⁰ By being banished from the sky where Sa-

²⁰“The term κατήγωρ, ‘accuser,’ is a literal translation of the Hebrew שָׂטָן *śāṭān*, ‘Satan.’ In Job and Zechariah שָׂטָן *śāṭān* always occurs with the definite article, שָׂטָן *haśśāṭān*, as a way of indicating the title of the heavenly accuser. ὁ κατήγωρ is articular because it refers to this well-known figure in biblical and early Jewish tradition. Though the LXX regularly translates שָׂטָן *śāṭān* with διάβολος (e.g., Job 1:6, 7, 9, 12; Zach 3:1), the term κατήγωρ, ‘accuser,’ is equally appropriate, and it is perhaps for that reason that the term διάβολος is introduced in v 12. The term κατήγωρ is transliterated in rabbinic sources in the form קַטְיֶגוֹר *qātēgōr* as one of the standard epithets of Satan (m. . Abot 4:11; Tg. Exod. 32:19; Str-B, 1:141–42). Some commentators have thus argued incorrectly that κατήγωρ is a Semitism (B. Weiss, *Johannes-Apokalypse*, 109; Bousset [1906] Page 657

tan could blast accusations against God's people now on earth his impact in this activity is muted and of no more impact.²¹ Quite interesting is the perspective τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, against our brothers, from the heavenly voice of God.²² A few manuscripts drop ἡμῶν, our, 342; Charles, 1:327; TDNT 3:636). In support of this view it is sometimes argued that a Hebrew loanword with an analogous formation, סֵנֵגוֹר *senégôr*, is attested in Greek only in the form συνήγορος, 'advocate,' never συνήγορ (TDNT 3:636). Rather, κατήγορ is a colloquial back formation from the genitive plural κατηγόρων on the analogy of such forms as ῥήτωρ (genitive plural ῥητόρων) and διάκων (genitive plural διακονῶν); see Deissmann, *Light*, 90–91; BDF §52; Moulton-Howard, *Accidence*, 127–28; TDNT 3:636; Mussies, *Morphology*, 114; Bauer-Aland, 861. The view that κατήγορ is a colloquial Greek formation is confirmed by PGM X.25–26, where the term is used as part of an all-purpose charm: ποιεῖ γὰρ πρὸς ἐχθροὺς καὶ κατηγόρας, 'for it works against enemies and accusers.'" [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 700–701.]

²¹"The conception of Satan as a member of the heavenly court (see 1 Kgs 22:19; Pss 82:1; 89:5–7; Jer 23:18, 22; the rabbis held that there was a heavenly law court presided over by God himself; see b. Sanh. 38b; Exod. Rab. 30:18; Lev. Rab. 24:2; P. Alexander in Charlesworth, *OTP* 1:244–45) indicates that Satan's traditional role was the accuser of the righteous before God. This tradition is found in the OT in Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7 (see T. Job 8:1–3; 16:2–4; 20:1–3) and Zech 3:1 (see 1 Chr 21:1). In Zech 3:1, the angel of the Lord and Satan play the roles of defender and prosecutor, respectively, of Joshua, and these opposing figures appear again in 4Q>Amrmb, where the opponents are Belial (also called the Prince of Darkness and Melchires^a) and Michael (also called the Prince of Light and Melchizedek). A different form of the tradition is reflected in 1 Enoch 40:7, part of a throne-room scene in 40:1–10, where סֵטָנִים *setānim*, 'satans,' are mentioned as those 'who come before the Lord of Spirits to accuse those who dwell on the dry ground' (tr. Knibb, *Enoch*) and are expelled from heaven. Apoc. Zeph. 3:8–9 describes 'the angels of the accuser' who sit at the gate of heaven and write down the sins people commit and transmit that information to the accuser himself. Similarly, in Apoc. Zeph. 6:17, the great angel that 'Zephaniah' saw in 6:8 is described by another angel as 'the one who accuses men in the presence of the Lord.' According to 3 Enoch 26:12, each day Satan confers with Samma<el, prince of Rome, and Dubbi<el, prince of Persia, and they record the sins of Israel and give them to the seraphim to transmit to God. Since there is no hint elsewhere in Revelation that Satan had a role to play in the heavenly court, it is likely that this tradition has been added here by way of explaining the presence of Satan in heaven in v 7. Hermas reportedly saw a vision of his mistress Rhoda in heaven in which she claimed that she had been taken up to heaven to accuse (ἐλέγχειν) him of his sins before the Lord (Hermas Vis. 1.1.4), much as a witness for the prosecution." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 701–702.]

²²"The phrase "our brothers" is problematic because the hymnic section in vv 10–12 was introduced as the utterance of 'a loud voice,' which seems to suggest that the speaker or singer is an unidentified individual, though it is, of course, possible for an individual to articulate the interests and concerns of the group to which he belongs. The expression 'our brothers,' however, seems to suggest that those in the heavenly group represented by the speaker are the peers of those who are yet on earth (i.e., the 'we'/'they' dichot-

because of its seeming awkwardness. Modern commentators seem hesitant to understand this assertion as God's sense of closeness to those of His people on earth with those who are in heaven. The idiom ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός means 'continually.'

The second and third strophes in v. 11 continue the affirmations of victory made possible by Michael's defeat of Satan:

12.11		καὶ	
B		αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν	
		διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου	
		καὶ	
		διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας	
		αὐτῶν	
		καὶ	
C		οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν	
		ἄχρι θανάτου.	

The common subject of these two core verbs focus the primary attention on believers following Christ as the antecedent of αὐτοὺς, them, in v. 10c. John naturally centers attention on the era of his readers in the beginning Christian era. First they have gained victory over Satan. This became possible through Michael's victory but was based primarily on the blood of the Lamb (cf. chap. 5) and on their faithful witness to Christ. The significance of this victory has already been powerfully affirmed in the seven Victory promises in chapters two and three with powerful impact.

As in these seven victory promises so also here, overcoming Satan comes out of faithfulness to Christ which is the point of the second prepositional phrase διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν. These martyrs have been true to their witness even to martyrdom.

Strophe C (above diagram) stresses the point that loving one's life was not a high priority. Rather being true to Christ even when it led to execution was the primary commitment of their life. This stands inside the general framework of Jewish apocalyptic teaching about martyrdom, but it has very dramatic Christian distinctives. One's commitment is to Christ rather than obeying the Torah.²³ True Christianity is faith commit-

omy presupposed by this statement constitutes one single group). Though Bousset suggests that the singers must be angels rather than humans ([1906] 342), Charles is surely correct that Christian martyrs in heaven must be intended (1:327). Since it appears, however, that their earthly colleagues have been martyred (v 11), the dichotomy between 'we' and 'they' is problematic because at least some of the earthly Christians are part of the heavenly group." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 701.]

²³"1 Enoch 50:2 predicts that 'the righteous will conquer in the name of the Lord of Spirits.' The motif of Jewish martyrs 'conquering' (νικῶν) their besiegers and torturers by facing suffering and death nobly is emphasized in 4 Macc 6:10, 'And like a no-

ment that is willing to die in order to remain consistent to its commitment to Christ. Anything less than such commitment is cast in serious doubt as to being legitimate saving commitment to Christ.

The fourth and fifth strophes form a conclusion of admonition to rejoice to those in heaven and a warning of bad things yet to come for those left on earth:

12.12 | διὰ τοῦτο
D *εὐφραίνεσθε,*
 | [οἱ] οὐρανοὶ
 | καὶ
 | οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες.
 |
E *οὐαὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν,*
 ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς
 ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν,
 εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει.

The introductory διὰ τοῦτο reaches back to the preceding three strophes as providing a reason for the admonition εὐφραίνεσθε. The vocative forms [οἱ] οὐρανοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες directs the admonition to those dwelling in Heaven with God. Note the plural οὐρανοὶ to distinguish Heaven as the place of dwelling, σκηνοῦντες. Very likely this expression is a modification of Deut. 32:43 (LXX):

εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοὶ, ἅμα αὐτῷ,
 καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ·
εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ,
 καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ·
 ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἰῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται,
 καὶ ἐκδικήσει καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς
 καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἀνταποδώσει,
 καὶ ἐκκαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.†
 Praise, O heavens, his people,
 worship him, all you gods!
 For he will avenge the blood of his children,
 and take vengeance on his adversaries;

ble athlete the old man, while being beaten, was victorious [ἐνίκᾳ] over his torturers.’ See also 4 Macc 7:4b, ‘Although his sacred life was consumed by tortures and racks, he conquered [ἐνίκησεν] the besiegers with the shield of his devout reason’ (see 4 Macc 9:6, 30; 11:20; 16:14; 17:15 [θεοσέβεια δὲ ἐνίκᾳ]). The verb νικᾶν occurs fifteen times in 4 Maccabees, frequently of conquering through the ὑπομονή, ‘endurance,’ of torture (1:11b, ‘By their endurance [τῆ ὑπομονῆ] they conquered [νικήσαντες] the tyrant’). This endurance, however, is a Stoic virtue, since it is based on pure reason (4 Macc 3:17–18; 6:33; 8:1), which is able to conquer the emotions (13:7). In T. Job 27.3–9, Satan claims that Job conquered (ἐνίκησας) him through perseverance (καρτερία). The same motif occurs in Christian martyrological literature. In Mart. Perpetua 10.13–14, the martyr states (tr. Musurillo, Acts, 119), ‘Then I awoke. I realized that it was not with wild animals that I would fight [pugnaturam] but with the Devil, but I knew that I would win the victory [uictoriam].’ Here, of course, *uictoria* means dying without renouncing faith in Christ.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 702.]

he will repay those who hate him,
 and cleanse the land for his people.

John takes terminology from Deuteronomy, restructures it, and then uses it to form the basis of the admonition to celebrate in the divine victory declaration. The use of εὐφραίνω in the middle voice here stands in sharp contrast to its use in the middle / passive voice²⁴ in 11:10 where the inhabited world is gloating in joy over the execution of the two witnesses on earth. Here in 12:10 God calls upon all the dwellers of Heaven to celebrate the defeat of the dragon.

The pair of vocative case forms, [οἱ] οὐρανοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες, *heavens and those dwelling in it*, redefine Deuteronomy’s οὐρανοὶ, O heavens, and ἔθνη, nations. The language of tabernacle and tent dwelling lies behind σκηνοῦντες from σκηνόω. This is appropriate religious terminology for dwelling in Heaven (cf. 7:15; 13:6; 21:3).²⁵ Our heavenly home is a worship center.

While all in heaven are urged to celebrate the victory over Satan, those on the earth are warned of even more difficulty ahead: οὐαὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, *woe to the earth and the sea*. Typically the opposite of an οὐαὶ is a μακαρισμός, a pronouncement of divine blessing. But the contrast in this victory declaration is between an admonition to celebrate victory and a warning of continued struggles.

One additional note concerning the οὐαὶ. First in 9:12 John indicates that the first οὐαὶ has passed but two more lay ahead. In 11:14 he mentions that the second οὐαὶ has passed but a third one is still ahead. The context strongly points to the seventh trumpet with the seven bowls of wrath being this third οὐαὶ, but it is never explicitly named. This is the third occurrence of οὐαὶ and thus the question is whether this constitutes the third οὐαὶ of the three. In 18:16, 19 a double οὐαὶ, οὐαὶ surfaces in regard to the downfall of the city Babylon. Probably the οὐαὶ here in 12:12 signals the beginning of a period of οὐαὶ that continues to the very end. The coming struggles from Satan’s last futile attempt to attack God’s people represents a period of οὐαὶ.

The directing of the warning to τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, to the earth and the sea, puzzled some copyists leading them to change the phrase to τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, *to those dwelling on the earth and on the sea*. By this addition they seek to limit the struggle to unbelievers since τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν

²⁴If εὐφραίνω is taken as passive voice in both 11:10 and 12:12, the sense is ‘being glad and cheerful. If as middle voice, then the idea is cheering themselves up from the implied feeling of gloom.

²⁵“Though the LXX uses σκηνοῦν and κατασκηνοῦν of the dwellers on the earth, our author does not.” [R.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John*, vol. 1, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1920), 302.]

inside Revelation is uniformly a reference to the unbelieving people world. But John carefully avoids such reference since he is fully aware that the struggles lying ahead include both believers and unbelievers.²⁶ The reference to τὴν γῆν as a figure of speech for the people of the earth is clear, but not the addition of τὴν θάλασσαν.²⁷ But urging caution here is that the first two οὐαὶ are presented as divine punishments on evil, from which believers on earth are exempted. Perhaps the heart of the third οὐαὶ will not be seen until the outpouring of the seven bowls of wrath which clearly are divine punishments on evil and evil people on the earth. The οὐαὶ in 12:12 simply signals the concentration of the devil's wrath targeting God's people with the help of evil people. This then leads up to the seven bowls of wrath as punishments of evil and evil people.

The core reason for this coming period of οὐαὶ is given as ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν, εἰδῶς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει, *because the devil has been cast down to you having great anger knowing that he has only a little time.* The οὐαὶ comes as a warning with the content of it explained in the causal ὅτι clause.

The primary assertion is simply κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *the devil has been cast down to you.* The use of κατέβη, *cast down*, rather than ἐβλήθη, *cast out*, as previously used underscores the banishment from the sky down to the earth referenced clearly in people terms by πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *to you.*

The two adverbial modifiers highlight the intensity of the οὐαὶ. First the devil is banished to the earth ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν, *having great anger.* He did not come to the earth voluntarily but under force as a defeated foe of God. And that fury is going to be focused on God's people living on the earth.²⁸

²⁶“The interpretative addition by a few mss. of τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν (‘those inhabiting’) before ‘the earth’ represents a scribal interpretation of the phrase as referring only to unbelievers, since ‘earth-dwellers’ is a technical term for unbelievers elsewhere in the book. But John is careful not to use that precise expression here, since he does not have in mind only or primarily unbelievers.” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 667.]

²⁷“While the term ‘earth’ is a figure of speech for the people of the world (cf. 14:16), it is not immediately evident why the author includes the “sea” in his pronouncement of woe.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 704.]

²⁸“Rather, the devil's fury is expressed against Christians, as vv 11 and 13–17 make clear. His destructive work on earth is also fueled by his ‘great wrath’ over losing his position in heaven. But his anger is sparked above all by his knowledge that ‘he has a little time’ to work his destruction on earth.” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 667.]

Second, the intensity of the οὐαὶ is heightened because εἰδῶς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει, *knowing that he has only a little opportunity.*²⁹ The nature of the expression is more along the lines of few opportunities. Satan is fully aware of the divine imposed limitations on what he can do against God's people. He does not have a blank check to do anything he desires in unlimited opportunity.³⁰

This final declaration in the οὐαὶ additionally serves to set up the next several scenes of this cosmic struggle that now has focused itself on the earth. In 12:13-17, Satan fails to success in attacking the woman, and then turns “to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.” He will enlist the help of two ‘sea monsters’ in this endeavor: 13:18-14:18. Then the victorious Lamb steps in to inflict a crippling blow on Satan: 14:1-13.

2. What does the text mean to us today?

What relevance does this cosmic struggle have to us in the beginning of the twenty-first century? Actually, quite a lot!

First, John in his cosmic scenes with their ahistorical nature reminds us that we live in a time when Satan has been banished to the earth in order to carry out his attacks on God's people. He is not way off somewhere up in the sky. Rather he is right here where we live and seek to honor God in our daily living.

But this passage also reminds us that it is in **defeat** that Satan has been banished to the earth, not in victory. The primordial war with Michael produced his defeat and banishment. He is a wounded dragon with

²⁹“This ‘little time’ is the same period as the three and a half years of 11:2–3; 12:6, 14; and 13:5 and the ‘delay’ of 10:6–7.¹³⁸ In Daniel 7–12 and Rev. 11:2 and 13:5 the three and a half years is the period of the end-time enemy's persecution of God's people (see on 11:1–2), from which 12:6 and 14 affirm that they are ultimately protected. Hence, the ‘little time’ here is figurative like the three and a half years.” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 667.]

³⁰“According to the eschatological schema of Rev 20:3, Satan is to be released for a short time (μικρὸς χρόνος) after his thousand-year confinement (in parallels in Jewish apocalypses, the evil angels are not released but are bound until the time of judgment; see 1 Enoch 18:16; 21:6). In Rev 17:10, the period of activity of the seventh king is described as ὀλίγον (here used as an adverb of time), meaning a ‘short [time],’ again reflecting the foreordained eschatological plan of God. Although the OT occasionally refers to the short time allotted to the wicked (Job 20:5; Prov 10:27), that limitation is based on the relatively short span of human life (Wis 2:1; 4 Ezra 8:5).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 704.]

limited opportunity and time. God has set limits on what he can do to us, and one of those things he cannot do is to come between us and God who stands with us and helps us cope with all the struggles. Neither can he steal Heaven away from us. Through the blood of the Lamb and consistency of our commitment to His testimony we stand sharing in this victory and this guarantees our ultimate victory over him at the end.

Finally, this text reminds us that we are dealing with a wounded dragon, defeated to be sure, but filled with fury against us as God's people. He will do absolutely everything within his limits to harm us both physically and spiritually. Ignoring or treating him superficially can be highly dangerous.