



REVELATION 12:7-12 | The Ancient Battle Assures our Future Victory

Sunday, September 28, 2014 – The Festival of St. Michael & All Angels

⁷ Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

*“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 brothers and sisters,
who accuses them before our God day and night,
has been hurled down.*

¹¹ *They triumphed over him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;
they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death.*

¹² *Therefore rejoice, you heavens
and you who dwell in them!
But woe to the earth and the sea,
because the devil has gone down to you!
He is filled with fury,
because he knows that his time is short.”*

It was a bold move. A prince brazenly stood before the King and challenged his authority. “Some power, some recognition, some authority must be given to me!” shouted the prince. But the King did not agree. Summoning his faithful princes and their armies the King went to war against this rebellious prince and his soldiers. In a colossal battle the two forces met good versus evil; the faithful versus the rebellious. But the evil forces of the rebellious prince were not strong enough. The King banished them from the kingdom. He did not destroy this rebellious prince—not yet.

A striking blow was made by the rebellious prince. In one last-ditch effort, this bold prince convinced one of the King's closest allies to rebel, too. With some doubt and deception, he convinced these people that the King was not who he claimed to be. With a simple lie, he led them to believe that they, too, deserved to know the *whole* truth.

And the King's kingdom came crumbling and crashing down. In the blink of an eye the masterpiece was ruined. It would not be the same, anymore. It could never be the same. The complete chaos that this soldier caused would have ripple effects for generations to come. And to anyone from the outside, it seemed as if all hope was lost.

But the King had one final move—the trump card, so to speak. Staring this prince in the eye the King promised that a descendant of the King would repair all the damage that this prince had caused. He promised that these people would be saved from the wicked actions of one rebellious prince. And he promised that his descendant would destroy Lucifer and his army for good.



It was still and quiet. All that could be heard was the faint sounds of crickets and frogs in the distance. That day had been like any other; the young woman had went about her business preparing for her upcoming marriage to a well-respected man of the community. But something that night would change her life forever.

In her bedroom that night stood a faithful prince. He had some very surprising news—news that would change her life. She was with child! "But how can this be?" she asked, dumbfounded. "It is as the King wishes," replied the prince. The King! The only response this peasant-girl could muster is, "I am the King's servant."

Outside the window the rebellious prince could not help but get involved. He knew the consequences of such a birth. He recognized these plans of the King as it unfolded. He knew who this child was. And he know what this child was going to do. He and his entire army were in the crosshairs. And he made every effort to rid the earth of this child.

To the fiancé he went, trying to convince him that his bride-to-be was unfaithful—marked with a scarlet letter. "Divorce her," he said. "Get rid of her. She is nothing but an embarrassment to you!" But the King found out about this scheme before it could fully develop. The faithful prince appeared to the father-to-be and encouraged him to stay with this young maiden. "The child she carries is in line with the King's will," said the prince. "Her child will play a role much bigger than you can only imagine. He will save his people from the tyranny of the rebellious prince."

With his first plan thwarted, the rebellious prince made his way to the king of the land. "If I make him jealous," said the prince, "perhaps I can convince him to take some decisive action against this child." Jealous he became; and decisive he was. With an order to kill every boy under the age of 2, this king made an effort to rid the earth of this impostor. But the good King, knowing the impetus behind this maniacal plan, sent his prince to the maiden and her now-husband. "Flee!" he encouraged. "Go to the safe land I have found." And the maiden and her husband went, with the small child in tow.

The rebellious prince was furious. Out of options, he waited until the opportune time came. Then he would make a move. But by then, it would essentially be too late.



It certainly was tempting; after all, he was starving. Here they were, alone in a wilderness. For forty days this young man had starved himself. And the rebellious prince knew that the time was right to strike. Coming to this young man, this rebellious prince levels a simple yet tempting proposal: "If you really

are the Son of the King, prove it. You're hungry; tell these rocks to become bread and eat! Use your power for good. Help yourself!" The Son of the King replied, "This is not the will of my King."

"Fine," said the rebellious prince, "but that King doesn't really care for you! After all, you've been out here for forty days. Where is he now? Why hasn't he helped you? Maybe, just maybe, he's forgotten about you. Test him. See if he's there. Will he really help you? Is he really here to protect you? Or are you just alone?" The Son of the King replied, "I know my King loves me. Why would I want to test such love?"

Flabbergasted, the rebellious prince made one last appeal: "What you have really isn't yours. You're just the Son of the king. Wouldn't it feel good to be in control? I'll give you all of this land if you but admit that I am right." The Son of the King had had enough. "Get away from me, Lucifer! I serve the King, and him alone!" After the rebellious prince left, it was then that the King sent his servants to his Son.

But the rebellious prince became worried. He knew that one, final, opportune time would need to present itself in order to defeat the Son of the King. And he waited patiently until that time.



He was greedy and self-centered; the perfect patsy to recruit. The rebellious prince knew that this follower of the Son of the King would do anything for money. So he convinced the leaders of the time to offer a substantial reward for an opportunity to rid the land of this nuisance. For 3 1/2 years the leaders of this people were looking for an opportunity to get rid of the Son of the King. And when this rebellious prince came around with a fool-proof plan, who could resist?

The plan was airtight: The sanctimonious Son of the King would, as he did every year, celebrate the festival in a room with his followers. After the traditional meal, he would find a spot in the nearby gardens to pray. It was then that they would strike.

No trial was needed. Blasphemy, according to the laws of the land, was punishable by death. The trouble was finding a very public and humiliating way for this Son of the King to die. That would require the help of the ruling peoples. Convincing them would take work. But for the rebellious prince, this was easier than expected.

Threatening rebellion and unrest, the people were able to convince the rulers of the land to punish the Son of the King. Not just with lashes and blows and humiliation, but with death. The people already hated him. He had spoken against them numerous times, so it was quite easy to convince them to go along with the plan.

And so it was set. The Son of the King, dressed in a crown, albeit of thorns, and a scarlet robe, albeit covered in his own blood, was brought before the people. "Behold, your king!" shouted the ruler. And right on cue, the mob shouted, "Crucify!"

He had done it. The rebellious prince had to all but sit back and watch as the Son of the King hauled his own implement of death to the execution site. He had to all but stand back and behold the sights and sounds of death and agony. And he knew he had won when that last breath left the chest of the Son of the King. It was true. Jesus was dead.

And Lucifer was emboldened. Shaking his fist he rallied his troops of evil angels and shouted sounds of victory. There lay Christ in the bands of death. The rebellion of mankind had placed him there. The sins of generations heaped on the lifeless body of the very Son of God. To everyone it appeared as if Satan had won. The reign of the King, of God himself, was over.



Yes, Christian, you did that. I did that. We, with the rest of mankind were co-conspirators with Lucifer and his army. In the most treacherous of ways, mankind was complicit in its own demise. We bought into the lie. We rebelled against God. And we fought him, tooth and nail, until we killed his Son. Every sin we commit; every evil thought we've had, every malicious word we speak drives in the nails further and further.

Our *fearless* leader snickers as he leaves us cold and helpless, amused that we could fall so hard for so simple of a lie. Like Adam and Eve and so many before us, Lucifer, that evil archangel, continues to lead us to rebel against God. He leads us to buy into the idea that God is somehow our enemy; that God doesn't have our best interests in mind. And the lie works so often!

It even works now, doesn't it. Lucifer stands victorious at the precipice of Golgotha, pointing at the lifeless body of the Son of God. "We've won!" he shouts. But that, too, is a lie. In reality we've lost everything. We've lost hope, life, joy, and peace. Waiting for us is nothing but pain and loss.

But, dear Christian, God is faithful. From the garden until now God has used his angels to deliver messages of promise and peace.



"Men of Galilee, why do you look for the living among the dead?" asked the angel that blessed morn. Triumphant from the grave rose Jesus, strong to save. He crushed sin, Satan, death, and hell. Christian, mark it well! He was buried like the rest of sinful man who ends his mortal span. Our Lord, Jesus—the Son of God—could not for long lie there, our own decay to share. Fierce though God's wrath had been on him because of sin, the fiery judgment burned no more; its fury had passed over. Nailed to the sacred tree was your iniquity! His cross has banished all your sin, your pardon it has brought in! Sure bond and guarantee God gave to you and me: The King, the Father has raised up his Son to seal redemption won. Now, Satan is undone! Now death's dread power is gone! From fear of hell you are set free through Jesus' victory!¹ Thanks be to God!



Soli Deo Gloria!

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¹ Franzmann, Werner. *Triumphant from the Grave*. St. 1-6. CW 151