



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

"The Showdown to Throw Down"

12:6-9

Boxing, wrestling, and (now) ultimate fighting all like to name prominent upcoming bouts.

Remember the "Rumble in the Jungle" - Ali-Frazier 1974. Or "The Thrilla' in Manila" - Ali-Frazier III 1975.

Here are some lesser known boxing titles: "Drama in Bahama," "Showdown in Motown," "The Brawl in Montreal," "The War at the Shore," and "Judgment Day in Monterrey."

Our text chronicles what is at least a second bout between two cosmic combatants: Michael the Archangel and Satan.

What would we call their fights if we had to name them for pay-per-view?

Revelation 12:6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

We've jumped ahead from the ascension of Jesus to Heaven in verse five to the middle of the Great Tribulation in verse six.

The "woman" (we saw in verses one through five) is the nation of Israel in the middle of the Great Tribulation. The "wilderness" means just that. Jews will have to flee Jerusalem into the surrounding wilderness to save themselves.

Jesus said the same thing in His prophetic talk on the Mount of Olives:

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

Matthew 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Matthew 24:17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

Matthew 24:18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Matthew 24:19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Matthew 24:20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

There seems to be a specific "place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days." The most easily attainable wilderness would be across the Jordan River and the Dead Sea into the regions of ancient Moab, Ammon, and Edom. Daniel mentions that these three areas will escape the end-times assault of the coming antichrist (11:36-45). Isaiah, too, seems to indicate this region (16:1-5) even singling out a place called Sela. It is modern day Petra, the famous rock city of Edom, where many speculate a large contingent of Jews will live-out the last half of the Great Tribulation.

Petra is located sixty to one hundred miles to the south of Jerusalem in a mountain chain. The site remained unknown to the Western

world until 1812 when it was discovered by Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. Enclosed by towering rocks and watered by a perennial stream, Petra not only possessed the advantages of a fortress but controlled the main commercial routes which passed through it to Gaza in the west, to Bosra and Damascus in the north, to Aqaba and Leuce Come on the Red Sea, and across the desert to the Persian Gulf.

There is a story that evangelist W.E. Blackstone spent \$8000 in the 1920's to have copies of the New Testament and gospel tracts placed in the caves at Petra so that Jews would be able to recognize their Savior at the final hour.

It seems that someone will stock Petra (or some place like it) in the final days of human history to shelter and save the Jews.

As you well know by now, “one thousand two hundred and sixty days” is exactly three and one half years. It's the last three and one half years before the Lord returns in His Second Coming.

Revelation 12:7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,

“War” is a word that describes a series of conflicts. This is not the first time these two have gone at it.

The first recorded conflict between Michael and Satan is over the body of Moses. Because Moses struck the Rock twice when God told him to only speak to it he was unable to go into the Promised Land. God took him to a high mountain from where he could see it. And there he died. In Deuteronomy 34:5-6 you read,

Deuteronomy 34:5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 34:6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.

But there is more to the story! Satan was a funeral crasher. In the Book of Jude you read,

Jude 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Maybe we could call the encounter, "The Fracas at the Funeral." At any rate, Michael fought fair and refused to talk badly of Satan. This is one reason why I think it is silly and unscriptural for people to go around insulting the devil.

Michael is quite a warrior. His name appears for the first time in Daniel chapter ten. Daniel was deep in prayer for a period of weeks. After three full weeks a messenger angel appeared to Daniel.

Daniel 10:12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

Daniel 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

By the way, here we have revealed to us one of the seeming mysteries of unanswered or delayed answers to prayer. God hears but there can be hindrances in the angelic world when the answer is given.

Who is "the prince of the kingdom of Persia"? Since Michael is called "one of the chief princes," we conclude that this prince of Persia is also a mighty angel, but a fallen one. He was probably assigned his place by Satan, who is called "the prince of the devils" (Matthew 9:34; 12:24), and "the prince of this world" (John 12:31).

The apostle Paul uses the word "principalities" about eight times in his writings. It's a word that may be translated as "governments." It would seem, then, that Satan has assigned fallen angels to certain countries.

Later in Daniel we're told this about Michael the Archangel:

Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

Michael the archangel has a particular duty to protect the nation of Israel. He is like a cosmic bodyguard.

The time Daniel was told about in his prophecy is the time we are reading about in Revelation twelve.

Michael will be the 'ultimate fighter' and win a decisive victory over Satan.

Revelation 12:8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

Revelation 12:9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

There is no doubt about the outcome of this skirmish. Heaven sustains no damage.

Heaven will finally no longer be accessible by Satan. We must always only get our information about the devil from Scripture. In the Book of Job we learn that Satan still has access to Heaven. God can call him there to give a report of his activities.

His base of operation seems to be the atmosphere around the earth. As we've said, he assigns demons to various earthly outposts. Mid-trib he will be fully and finally cast down to the earth. His privileges will be revoked. They'll change the access codes at the gates!

He will only have three and one half years on the earth until he is cast into the abyss for one thousand years. All the fallen angels, those we call demons, will be on the earth at once causing havoc until they, too, are incarcerated with the evil.

We'll see later on in the Revelation that after the thousand years Satan is released to lead one final failed rebellion. Then he will be cast into the Lake of Fire, into Hell, not as its ruler but as its primary prisoner and sufferer.

Scholars point out that verse nine is the exact middle of the Book of the Revelation. Appropriate since it chronicles the most significant event of the exact middle of the Great Tribulation.

Notice the amazing assertion in verse nine that Satan "deceives the whole world." Scholars and scientists and philosophers may not 'believe' there is a devil. It doesn't keep him from deceiving them. It's why some of the smartest people say and believe some of the dumbest things.

Here's one. Creation scientists point out that the intricate design of the universe and everything in it points to a designer. Order, they say, cannot come out of chaos.

Atheist scientists counter that by saying, "Why can't order come out of chaos?" That's their answer.

So if you say that a bunch of gold and gears that was blown up cannot become a wrist watch they say, "Sure it can!"

They're not so much dumb as they are deceived.

Then there is religion. All religion is a massive deception. Satan loves religion! He establishes religions in every culture in order to deceive the human race.

Everything that is not biblical Christianity is a deception that has, at its roots, a satanic inspiration.

So what's your name for this final cosmic encounter between Michael and Satan?

How about, “The Archangel Mangle?” Or, “Showdown to Throw-down?”

Whatever you call it you can start counting down the days until the main event: The Second Coming of Jesus.