

Few angels are mentioned by name in the Bible. I am one. Michael. Jude describes me as an archangel.¹ I am also mentioned in the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation*. You can't help but notice all the angels in the book of Revelation. The last named angel in the Bible is Abaddon, also known as Apollyon, the angel of the Abyss that John names in *Revelation*. He was king of the locust-like creatures that tortured people when the fifth angel sounded a trumpet.² I get noticed shortly after the seventh angel blew the seventh trumpet. After that trumpet sound, God's temple in heaven was opened. Then the scene shifted, and John got to see amazing things.

Luke names Gabriel as an angel.³

A wondrous sign appeared in Heaven; a pregnant woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. Another sign appeared in heaven; a giant red dragon with seven heads and crowns, and ten horns. The dragon's tail swept a third of the stars from the sky and flung them to Earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman to devour her child when it was born. But the male child was snatched up to God, and the woman fled to the desert for 1,260 days where God took care of her.

My turn. There was war in Heaven, and my angels and I fought against the dragon and his angels. We defeated the dragon, and his angels, and hurled them to the earth. The dragon was Satan. The arch enemy of mankind from day one. We defeated him.

That epic battle gets only three verses in your Bible! Now, I'm not complaining that it only gets three, although I do think John could have been more expansive. What I want to point out is why these verses illustrate why *Revelation* is so fascinating, and frustrating, and why there are so many interpretations of it.

Ask yourself these kinds of questions: Was this war literal or symbolic? If literal, did it happen in the distant past or in the future? If symbolic, what does it symbolize? How does this account fit

¹ Jude 1:9

² Revelations 9:1-11

³ Luke 1:26

into the overall story of *Revelation*? Does this mean that Satan is on Earth now because I put him there? Why didn't I just kill Satan instead of hurl him to Earth?

If you delve into *Revelation*, you find out that you never get to the end of these types of question. Way more questions than answers. Fortunately, as John said at the beginning, you get blessed by reading, hearing, and taking to heart the words of *Revelation*.⁴ You don't have to understand it to get a blessing.

Anyway, after hurled to Earth, Satan was filled with fury and pursued the woman. But God protected the woman, so Satan went to make war against the rest of the offspring of the woman. Those offspring were those who obey God's commandments and follow Jesus.

It's not often that John explains the things he is seeing in Heaven, but at this point you know that Satan is the dragon, and he is in a war to destroy the people of God. You know that I, Michael, defeated Satan and sent him to Earth from Heaven.

The next thing John saw was a fearsome beast arising from the sea. It had ten horns, seven heads, ten crowns on his horns, and a blasphemous name on each head. Satan gave the beast all of his power and great authority, so that the whole world was astonished enough to follow and worship Satan and the beast. Well, not the whole world. The saints of God whose names were written in the book of life did not do so, and they endured great persecution because of it.

Another beast rose from the earth, and was given great power to enact on behalf of the first beast. He set up an image of the first beast and forced everyone to worship it. He had such power that no one could buy or sell unless they had the mark of the beast on their right hand or forehead. The mark, or name, or number of the beast was 666. This number has permeated your culture in such an interesting way. Often associated with strange mystical power. References abound. In rock bands alone, it's code almost. Anytime anyone wants to infer apocalyptic or satanic mayhem, it's 666.

John saw another amazing sight. Jesus was standing on Mount Zion with his 144,000 servants singing praise to him. Three angels were flying in midair. The first proclaimed the eternal gospel to everyone on earth. The second proclaimed that Babylon had fallen. The third gave a terrible warning about worshiping the beast or receiving its mark. Afterward, other angels came to gather the harvest of the earth, which seems to have resulted in great devastation.

John must have felt relieved with what happened next. He saw a sign in heaven of seven angels with the seven last plagues. When these plagues ended, God's wrath would be complete. The seven plagues were contained in seven bowls. As the bowls were poured out, abscesses broke out all over the bodies of those who had the marking of the beast. Then poisoned water, scorching heat from the sun, debilitating darkness, drought, earthquakes beyond the Richter scale, and hail, boulder-sized hail, weighing hundreds of pounds pummeling the earth and its

⁴ John 1:3

people. Catastrophes the likes of which the planet has never seen. Maybe now they would soften their hearts. Maybe now, they would understand the order of things. Mankind cursed God. (Michael is beyond consoling, beyond understand, beyond mercy, he is horrified) Instead of repenting, mankind cursed God!

John was carried away to see a woman sitting on a beast. She was wealthy, filthy rich. An angel tried to explain to John about the beast and woman, but I'm pretty sure John was just as mystified after the explanation as before. What John was clear about was this, Jesus would make war against all evil and overcome it.

According to the angel, the woman was a city ruling over the earth with every manner of evil. Then another angel came and proclaimed the destruction of that city and all of those with a relationship with the city.

Let's pause and summarize, a lot has happened.. My angels and I defeated Satan and his angels and threw them to Earth. Through the beast, the fallen angel, Satan ruled over the world and caused evil of every sort. The faithful people of God suffered immense persecution, but persevered. The world became evil and dominated by the enemy of God, Satan. God continued to discipline people hoping they would repent and turn to him, but few did. Eventually, God reached the end of his patience.

What happened when God ended his patience? All inhabitants in Heaven began praising and worshiping God because it was the start of the end. The adversary's reign was over; Satan's rule on earth was at an end.

John saw Heaven standing open. Instead of quaking in fear, John started celebrating. There was a gigantic white horse ridden by Jesus himself, followed by the armies of heaven on white horses. John's words were entirely inadequate to describe the awesome sight before him. The results of the battle were so sure that another angel invited all the birds of the air to come and eat the flesh of all the evil people of the world that would soon be defeated.

The beast gathered all the kings and people of the earth to fight against Jesus and his troops. It was a short battle. The beast and false prophet were captured and thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, and all of their troops were killed. The birds gorged themselves with their flesh.

As John joyfully watched his Lord conquer the earth, an angel came and seized the defeated enemy of God, the arch enemy of mankind, the serpent, Satan, and bound him in the Abyss for one thousand years, where he was unable to wrought any evil on Earth. The faithful followers of Jesus came to life and reigned with him for a thousand years. Satan was released at the end of that time, and had a last-gasp war, and was defeated again. This time he was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur with the beast and false prophet for all eternity.

After countless eons, God's patience came to an end. The status of all eternity was about to be fixed. John saw a great white throne with God sitting on it. The dead were judged according to

what they had done. Each person was judged, then death and Hades were also thrown into the lake of fire. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

For those whose names were written in the book of life, they got to be part of the new heaven and earth, but I will leave it to Peter to tell you of that.

Many lessons to learn from *Revelation*, but I want to leave you with something that often gets lost in the telling. Yes, there are epic battles, and evil is formidable, and there is a lot of scary stuff mentioned in John's writing, and some of it is indecipherable, but I'm an angel, archangel, and though I don't know everything, I do know this about all that: God wins. You definitely want to be on his side before all this starts."