

## SATAN'S REBELLION TOUCHED OFF A COSMIC WAR THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE ...

**Pride goes before destruction,  
and a haughty spirit before a fall.**  
(Proverbs 16:18 ESV)

- The Bible warns that “pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling” (Proverbs 16:18). **The most notorious and tragic illustration of that principle, the one with the most far-reaching consequences, was Satan’s prideful rebellion against God.** By it Lucifer, having fallen from heaven like lightning (Luke 10:18), was cast down from his exalted position as the “anointed cherub who covers” (Ezekiel 28:14). **He forfeited his place as the highest created being and became the supreme enemy of God.** Satan’s rebellion touched off a cosmic war throughout the universe—a war dwarfing any other war in human experience. Satan’s war against God is a two-front war. By leading a mutiny against God among the angels, Satan attempted unsuccessfully to destroy the paradise of heaven. By leading a mutiny against God among men, Satan destroyed the earthly paradise of the Garden of Eden, plunged the whole human race into decay and corruption, and usurped (temporarily) the role of the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 16:11).
- **The opening campaign of Satan’s war of the ages took place in heaven.** When he rebelled (Isaiah 14:12–15; Ezekiel 28:12–17), one-third of the angels

foolishly and wickedly cast their lots with him. None of them could have known what the eternal consequences of their choice would be. Wanting to be like God, they became as much unlike Him as possible. These fallen angels (or demons) became Satan’s storm troopers, doing the bidding of their evil commander. They fight against divine purpose, making war with both the holy angels and the human race. [Ibid.]

- When Adam and Eve plummeted into corruption by choosing to listen to Satan’s lies and disobey God, **the human race became embroiled in the cosmic war of the ages.** In fact, since the Fall the **earth has been the primary theater** in which that war has been fought. Though already fallen, every member of **the human race faces the same choice as the angels did in eternity past: to fight on God’s side or on Satan’s. Remaining neutral is not an option,** for in Matthew 12:30 Jesus declared, “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”
- **The final battles of Satan’s long war against God are yet to be fought.** They will take place in the future, during the last half of the seven-year tribulation period, the time Jesus called the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21). At that time Satan, aided by the absence of the raptured church and the presence of increased demon hordes (9:1–11), will mount his most desperate assaults

against God’s purposes and His people. But despite the savage fury with which those assaults will be carried out, they will not succeed. The Lord Jesus Christ will effortlessly crush Satan and his forces (19:11–21) and send him to the abyss for the duration of the millennial kingdom (20:1–2). After leading a final rebellion at the close of the Millennium, Satan will be consigned to eternal punishment in the lake of fire (20:3, 7–10).

- The dragon is further described as having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. He is depicted as a seven-headed monster that rules the world. **Satan has been allowed by God to rule the world since the Fall and will continue to do so until the seventh trumpet sounds** (11:15). The seven heads with their seven diadems (diadema; royal crowns symbolizing power and authority) represent seven consecutive world empires running their course under Satan’s dominion: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist’s future empire (17:9–10). **The final kingdom, ruled by Antichrist, will be a ten-nation confederacy; the ten horns represent the kings who will rule under Antichrist** (17:12; cf. 13:1; Daniel 7:23–25). The shifting of the diadems from the dragon’s heads to the beast’s horns (13:1) reveals the shift in power from the seven consecutive world empires to the ten kings under the final Antichrist.

- **Satan’s pervasive, evil influence is not limited to the human realm, but extended first into the angelic realm.** In the picturesque language of John’s vision, the dragon’s tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. The references to the dragon’s angels in verses 7 and 9 indicate that the stars of heaven are angels. The genitive case offers further support for that interpretation: these are stars belonging to heaven; that is their proper abode. Angels are depicted symbolically as stars elsewhere in Scripture (9:1; Job 38:7).
- When Satan fell (Isaiah 14:12–15; Ezekiel 28:12–17), he swept away a third of the angelic host with him. Along with their defeated leader, those evil angels were cast from heaven to the earth. (It should be noted that although he was cast from his dwelling in heaven, Satan, in this present age, has access to God’s presence; see 12:10; Job 1, 2. As noted in the discussion of 12:7–9 in chapter 2 of this volume, he will be permanently barred from heaven after his defeat by Michael and the holy angels during the Tribulation.)
- **The number of angels** who joined Satan in his rebellion is not revealed, but **is vast.** Revelation 5:11 says that the number of the angels around God’s throne numbered “myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands.”
- *All excerpts on this page: [MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2000). Revelation 12–22. Chicago: Moody Press.]*