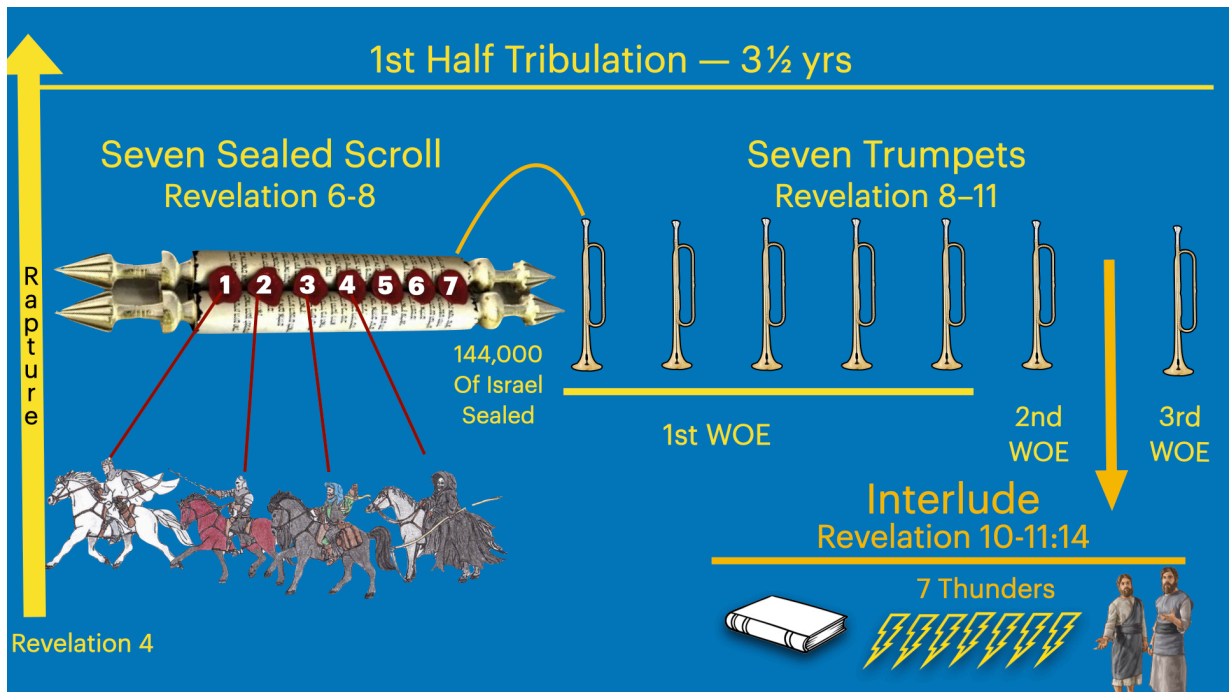


Revelation, Part 12 — Seven Notable Figures

The sounding of the seventh trumpet introduces the events that take place in the last half of the tribulation.



Several notable figures are introduced during this period of time.

Before the seven angels pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath, seven notable figures are introduced. The events begin with the scene in heaven when the last trumpet sounds and the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ

is introduced.

- The twenty four elders representing the resurrected redeemed were previously seen (4:10-11) and are continuing to worship God (11:15).
- The Lord Jesus Christ (5:8-10) is now declared to reign forever and ever (11:15).
- The sun clothed woman (12:1-6)
- Her Manchild (12:4-5)
- Michael and his angels (12:7-8)
- The great dragon (Satan) (12:7-12)
- The beast from the sea (13:1-10)
- The beast from the earth (13:11-18)
- The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1-5)
- Three angels proclamations (14:6-13)
- Reaping earth's harvest and grapes of wrath (14:14-20)
- The seven angels with seven bowls of God's wrath (15:1-16:21)
- The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast (17:1-18:24)
- Christ on a white horse with the armies of heaven (19:11-16)
- Defeat of the beast and his armies (19:17-21)

After the seven notable figures are introduced, seven angels pour out their seven bowls of God's wrath upon the earth.

The Seventh Trumpet — The Kingdom proclaimed

Revelation 11:15 NKJV Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

As soon as the seventh angel sounded, loud voices are heard in heaven with a joyful proclamation, "*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!*"

God's plan for creation and redemption is reaching its full realization. This is an announcement of the transfer of kingship. The kingdoms of this world have been under the dominion of the "ruler of the world."

John 12:31 NKJV Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Satan has been the ruler of this world.

In Ephesians 2:2, the prince of the power of the air is the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. The time for Satan's judgment does not only occur on judgment day, the prince of the power of the air is already judged. The kingdoms, governments and rulers of this world have been under the sway of the wicked one, (1 John 5:19). This will especially be true under the rule of the antichrist. The world will be swallowed up with sin, evil, war

and conflict. That is not the end of the story. God has already declared that *“the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”* The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ secured Satan’s defeat in all of his power, rule, and reign. As the seventh trumpet sounds, the events of the last half of the tribulation begin and the culmination of these things will be the defeat of the kingdom of Satan and the setting up of the Kingdom of Christ on this earth. God is going to reign in power over this world when Jesus Christ returns to this earth to rule and reign over the nations and peoples of the earth. When this declaration is made the hosts of heaven respond with joyful praise.

Revelation 11:16-17 NKJV And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

“Because You have taken Your great power and reigned” refers to the victory that Christ has already gained. From God’s point of view, Satan is already defeated. When Christ was raised from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God in heavenly places, He was put in a position far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, (Ephesians 1:20-21). When He ascended to that position, Jesus Christ took His great power and authority and began to reign. The certainty of victory over Satan and the kingdom of darkness has already been secured through Christ’s work and victory.

The wrath of God

Revelation 11:18 NKJV The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet the unrivaled wrath of God will be poured out on a wicked world and upon Satan and his dominion.

Hebrews 10:31 NKJV It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The time for the wrath of God on the wicked has come.

The judgment and reward of the righteous

Revelation 11:18 NKJV The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.

This time for the reward of God's servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear His name is most likely the Judgment Seat of Christ.

There are three aspects to the believer's judgment.

The first judgment was at the Cross.

John 12:31-32 NKJV Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."

The cross was the place where all sin, sinners and Satan were judged. Any believer who confesses his sin, accepts Christ, and identifies with Him as their Substitute and Savior is judged and released at the cross.

1 John 1:9 NKJV If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When we are judged at the cross, the faithful will not be judged according to salvation since the blood and the cross of Christ have put away our sins.

John 3:18 NKJV He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 5:24 NKJV "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

The second aspect of believer's judgment is a self-examination and continual act of sanctification.

This is a continual action of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in believer's lives.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 NKJV For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

The third aspect of the believer's judgment occurs before the Judgment Seat of Christ, or Bema Judgment.

This judgment is not for condemnation but for reward.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 NKJV each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself

will be saved, yet so as through fire.

2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

The exact timing of the judgment of believers is difficult to determine.

It is apparent to many that the judgment of believers occurs at the time of the rapture of the church.

Revelation 4:10 NKJV the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne...

Revelation 5:8-11 tells us these come from every tribe, tongue, people and nation and have been made kings and priest to our God; and we shall reign on earth.

Obviously there are many things about this judgment that are unknown. We do know that every believer was appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive reward for the things done in this body.

The believer's rewards are called crowns.

1. The Crown of Rejoicing

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 NKJV For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.

Paul considered his converts his crown of rejoicing. He expected to receive his crown at the coming of Jesus. This is the soul winner's crown.

2. The Crown of Righteousness

2 Timothy 4:7-8 NKJV I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

3. The Crown of Life

The crown of life is promised to those who love the Lord.

James 1:12 NKJV Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Revelation 2:10 NKJV Do not fear any of those things which you are about

to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

4. The Crown of Glory

This is the crown for pastors and elders.

1 Peter 5:4 NKJV and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

The Temple of God and the Ark in heaven

Revelation 11:19 NKJV Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

When God instructed Moses to build a Tabernacle, he was to follow the pattern that God had given him. The earthly Tabernacle and Temple were copies of the things in the heavens.

Hebrews 9:23-24 NKJV Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

Hebrews 9:28 NKJV so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

The Temple of God and the ark of His covenant are the place where grace, mercy, and salvation are found. There has been much speculation about the location of the ark of the covenant that was constructed by Moses according to the pattern that God had given him.

- Some believe it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians when they looted and burned the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:18-19).
- The Essenes discovered a copper scroll that listed 64 places where artifacts from the Temple were hidden during the Roman siege and the Jewish Revolt around 70 AD.
- In 1307 the Knights Templar were reported to have found the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy Grail.
- Leen Ritmeyer claims that he has found a secret place under the Temple Mount and believes the Ark of the Covenant and much of the temple furniture is stored in that chamber.

- Others believe it was taken to Ethiopia and is preserved in the ancient holy city of Axum in the Church of our Lady Mary of Zion.
They believe that the Queen of Sheba and Solomon had a son who was raised as a Jew. When he visited Jerusalem, he is reported to have had a dream of impending destruction and took the real Ark and left a replica in its place.

The presence of the Temple of God and the Ark of God's covenant are indicative of the fact that the saints have received their rewards in heaven. The Ark of the Covenant refers to the throne of God in heaven. In the tabernacle and the Temple, the Ark of His Covenant was the place where God would come down and speak with His people. It was the place where mercy and atonement could be found.

The Sun Clothed Woman, The Man-Child, and the Dragon

Revelation 12

John is continuing to experience the second vision and sees a great sign in heaven. This sign is an object of great spiritual wonder and significance.

This is the first of seven signs that are given him in the next three chapters.

- The woman, representing Israel, (12:1-2)
- The dragon, representing Satan, (12:3-4)
- The man-child, referring to Jesus, (12:5)
- The angel Michael, head of the angelic host, (12:7)
- The offspring of the woman — believers in the Tribulation, (Revelation 12:17)
- The beast out of the sea — the antichrist, (13:1-10)
- The beast out of the earth, representing the false prophet who promotes the antichrist, (13:11-18)

In this section, a series of visions or signs are shown to John that that are a revelation of Christ and His war with evil and Satan. Each of these signs depict parts of the ultimate victory that is attained through Christ's redemptive work. The heavens or sky appears to become a stage that reveals a drama for John.

The sun clothed woman is Israel.

Revelation 12:1 NKJV Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

The sign of the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a garland of twelve stars represents the glory and dominion promised in the coming kingdom. The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

This sign is similar to the dream that Joseph had in the Old Testament.

Genesis 37:9 NKJV Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, “Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.”

In Joseph’s dream, the sun represented Jacob, the moon his mother and the 12 stars the sons of Jacob. Joseph was dreaming of his call and position over his brother.

There are several interpretations of the sun clothed woman.

She is seen as Mary the mother of Jesus, the church, believing Jews, or ethnic Israelites. The “sun clothed woman” is God’s people through whom the Messiah came. Clarity about her identity is seen later in this section.

Verses 2 and 5 should be read together.

Revelation 12:2 NKJV Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

Much of Israel’s history unfolds in this sign. The woman was crying out in pain as she was about to give birth.

Revelation 12:5 NKJV She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

This clearly refers to Jesus Christ in His ultimate position of glory, power, and authority. It is easily understood why some think the woman is Mary, the Church, believing Jews, or ethnic Israel. The woman represents the people that gave birth to Jesus Christ. Paul said Christ came out of Israel, (Romans 9:4-5). Isaiah indicated Israel would travail in pain and bring forth a man-child, (Isaiah 66:7-8). After Jesus Christ completed His work of redemption on the cross, He arose in three days victorious over death and the grave. Forty days later, the Messiah, her Child, was caught up to God and His throne. Now, He is in a position of honor and power where He will rule with a rod of iron.

The red dragon or Satan

Revelation 12:3 NKJV And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

The second sign in heaven is the red dragon or the devil. The seven heads, ten horns, and seven diadems represents universal earthly authority, cunning, and dominion. Satan is seen in the strength of his evil works. The Bible tells us that Satan was the highest and most glorious being that God created. Because of his original position and appearance, he was filled with pride. When the Bible speaks of Satan as a dragon, it is referring to his work,

authority, and power and not necessarily his appearance. Scripture describes him coming as an angel of light to deceive even the elect. It is noteworthy that Satan is described as a dragon several times in the Revelation, (12:3-4, 7-9, 13, 16-17; 13:1-2; 13:4, 11; 16:13; 20:2). He is the prince of this world, (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). He is the prince of the power of the air, (Ephesians 2:2). He is king of his kingdom, (Matthew 12:26; 4:8-9). He has a grip on the whole world, (1 John 5:19).

Isaiah 14 tells of Satan's fall from his original estate and position.

Isaiah 14:12-15 NKJV "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Satan's downfall was his attempt to ascend to the throne of God and be like the Most High. When he fell from his lofty position, a third of the angels were taken down in rebellion with him.

Revelation 12:4 NKJV His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

A third of the stars of heaven is a representation of the fallen angels. From the beginning, Satan's obsession has been to disrupt and prevent God's purpose and plan with His people. The third of the stars are the principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places, (Ephesians 6:12).

Jude 6 NKJV And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

Among the third of the fallen angels are those who are held in chains of darkness, who will be released from the bottomless pit after the sounding of the fifth trumpet.

2 Peter 2:4 NKJV For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

Revelation 12:4 NKJV His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

Satan attempted to destroy Christ as soon as he was born. Satan was not able to defeat Christ or God's plan.

Revelation 12:6 NKJV 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.

This helps us to understand that the "woman" is Israel and not Mary or the church. Satan has done everything he could to devour the woman. He has constantly been on the attack against God's people. Even after people believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan does everything that he can to turn followers away from Christ. The woman flees into the wilderness where God has prepared a place to protect her during the last half of the tribulation. We are not told specifically where the place in the wilderness is located. Some think this is Petra in Edom, south of the Dead Sea.

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

The place has been prepared by God where the remnant of Israel will be protected during the last half of the tribulation.

Satan Thrown Out of Heaven

Revelation 12:7-8 NKJV And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

Michael is one of the mighty archangels who serve God. He is not Jesus as some suppose. At the middle of the tribulation, Michael and his angels will war against Satan and his angels. This war will take place in the heavenly realms. It is no doubt a spiritual war, but when Satan and his angels are defeated in the heavenly places, they will be cast down and confined to earth.

Revelation 12:9-10 NKJV 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. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

From the very early days after his fall, Satan has accused those who serve God.

In the Old Testament, Job was accused before God.

Satan told God that Job's faith was not real and that he only served God because he was blessed. Throughout history, Satan accused and warred against God's people.

John 10:10 NKJV The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Ephesians 6:12 NKJV For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

This is a time of great celebration in heaven when Satan will be cast out and never again have access to heaven to accuse believers before God.

"Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come."

God's strength will be demonstrated and Satan will be defeated and cast out of heaven. The kingdom of our God will be established forever and ever. The result of God's glorious salvation will be reason for all in heaven to rejoice. Satan's constant accusation against believers will not be heard in heaven.

Believers have been given three powerful tools against Satan's constant attack.

Revelation 12:11 NKJV And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

First, they overcame by the blood of the Lamb.

The blood of Jesus is powerful because He died and rose again in victory. The blood of Jesus speaks of His literal death in our place, on our behalf, before God. We are justified by His blood and saved from wrath through Him, (Romans 5:9). There is overcoming power in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. We need to keep this ever before us. There is victory over Satan through the blood of Christ.

Second, they overcame by the word of their testimony.

Believers know that Christ is their victory. Believer's confession makes it clear that they are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. He is our victory. The words of your testimony or confession are important.

Third, they did not love their lives to the death.

They did not love life more than Christ. This love is the agape or self-sacrificing love. Jesus is more precious than the pleasures and comforts of life.

Revelation 12:12 NKJV Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

Satan’s power is real and terrifying, but his time is short and he is determined to do as much violence and evil as possible. Due to the short amount of time that he has remaining, Satan will escalate his attack on the world and especially Israel. During the last half of the tribulation, he will do everything in his power to destroy and violate anything that is good.

Revelation 12:13-14 NKJV Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

The wings of a great eagle represent a swift escape from the events that are to transpire. This is similar to the description of the Exodus.

Exodus 19:4 NKJV You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.

Israel will be protected during the last half of the tribulation from the presence of the serpent or Satan.

Revelation 12:15 NKJV So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

The flood represents overwhelming evil and persecution. This will be a greater attempt of Satan to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus spoke about this in Matthew 24:15-22.

Matthew 24:15 NKJV “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

Remember the abomination of desolation is Satan setting himself up to be worshipped in the temple in Jerusalem.

Matthew 24:16-22 NKJV “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 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. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

When the serpent spews this flood of wrath out against the woman, God has a plan for protection.

Revelation 12:16 NKJV But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

Satan's attack against Israel is prevented from being successful. God's protection of His people is as great as is necessary. When the enemy comes in, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him, (Isaiah 59:19).

Isaiah 43:2 NKJV When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.

God is able to protect His people even in the greatest times of tribulation. After Satan is confined to the earth, he will become furious. Knowing that his time is limited, he will strike out against anyone who bears the name and promise of God. Since he will no longer be able to accuse the elect before God in heaven, he will try to persecute them on earth.

Revelation 12:17 NKJV And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

When Satan realizes that he cannot touch Israel, he will pursue any and all who actively confess Jesus Christ. The word "enraged" means "provoked to anger." It describes the passion of furious and raging desire for revenge to persecute and kill. This remnant probably refers to Jews and Gentiles who refuse to worship Satan and his Beast, (Revelation 13:4, 7, 15). The last half of the tribulation will see a worldwide escalation of persecution of those who truly believe in Jesus Christ. As a result of his wrath and intense anger, Satan and the Antichrist will strike out in great wrath. This will lead to the battle of Armageddon.

Revelation 13:7 NKJV It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.