

41 ACCUSER OF THE BROTHERS

KEY VERSES: “I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now is come the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night...Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has gone down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time.” Rev. 12:10-12.

1. PHARISEES, SCRIBES, LEADERSHIP SEEK TO KILL JESUS USING LIES, SLANDER.

- A. They [scribes, Pharisees] said this testing him, that they might have something to accuse him of.” Jn. 8:6
- B. The Pharisees asked Jesus, “‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?’ that they might accuse him.” Mt. 12:10
- C. The scribes and Pharisees were “seeking to catch him in something he might say, that they might accuse him.” Lk 11:54
- D. “They [chief priests, scribes, assembly] began to accuse him, saying, ‘We found this man perverting the nation, forbidding paying taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.’” Lk 23:2
- E. “The chief priests and the scribes stood, vehemently accusing him.” Lk 23:10
- F. “Now the chief priests and the whole council sought witnesses against Jesus to put him to death, and found none. 56 For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony didn’t agree with each other.” Mk 14: 55-56
- G. “Some stood up, and gave false testimony against him, saying, ‘We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’...their testimony did not agree.” Mk 14:57-59
- H. Pilate said, “You brought this man to me as one that perverts the people, and see, I have examined him before you, and found no basis for a charge against this man concerning those things of which you accuse him.” Lk 23:14

2. JESUS’ DISCIPLES ALSO SUBJECT TO FALSE ACCUSATIONS, LIES, SLANDER, DEATH

- A. “‘A servant is not greater than his lord.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” Jn 15:20
- B. “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household!” Mt. 10:25
- C. “They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, and came against him [Stephen] and seized him, and brought him in to the council, 13 and set up false witnesses...”. Acts 6:10-13
- D. When the accusers saw Paul, they “stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, crying out, ‘Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place.’” Acts 21:27-28 (see also Acts 23:28-9, 24:2,8,13, 26:2,7)
- E. “What shall we do to these men? Because indeed a notable miracle has been done through them, as can be plainly seen by all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we can’t deny it.” Acts 4:16.

3. JAMES, THE HALF BROTHER OF JESUS, AND HIS ASSOCIATES WERE FALSELY ACCUSED AND EXECUTED FOR “BREAKING THE LAW”. (AD 62)

The high priest “formed an accusation against them [James the Just and his associates] as breakers of the law. He delivered them to be stoned; but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done...for that what he [high priest] had already done was not to be justified...” Josephus, “The Antiquities of the Jews” 20.9.1.

4. JOSEPHUS REPORTS OF SLANDER AND MURDER AGAINST UPRIGHT CITIZENS DURING THE WAR.

A. Zealots plundered Jerusalem’s neighboring villages and cities accusing fellow citizens and using mock trials.
Jesus of Gamaliel addressed Idumean leadership: “But now for these men who have invited you, if you were to examine them one by one, every one of them would be found to have deserved ten thousand deaths; for the very rascality and offscouring of the whole country, who have spent in debauchery their own substance, and, by way of trial beforehand, have madly plundered the neighboring villages and cities, in the upshot of all, have privately run together into this holy city. They are robbers, who by their prodigious wickedness have profaned this most sacred floor, and who are to be now seen drinking themselves drunk in the sanctuary, and expending the spoils of those whom they have slaughtered upon their unsatiable [sic] bellies.” Wars 4.4.3 (see also Wars 2.13.6)

B. Bored with simply killing people, the zealots contrived “charges” and “trials” for their amusement.

“And now these zealots and Idumeans were quite weary of barely killing men, so they had the impudence of setting up fictitious tribunals and judicatures for that purpose.” Wars 4.5.4

C. Zealots invented accusations out of thin air, torturing and murdering on any pretense.

“They... were still inventing somewhat or other that was pernicious ... and when they had resolved upon any thing, they executed it without mercy, and omitted no method of torment or of barbarity.” Wars 5.1.5

D. Zealots bribed men to accuse Jews of stature and wealth of treachery, treason, or desertion so they could imprison or kill them and take their wealth.

“For the men that were in dignity, and withal were rich, they were carried before the tyrants themselves; some of whom were falsely accused of laying treacherous plots, and so were destroyed; others of them were charged with designs of betraying the city to the Romans; but the readiest way of all was this, to suborn [bribe] somebody to affirm that they were resolved to desert to the enemy.” Wars 5.10.4

E. Zealots contrived charges against Zacharias because of his eminence, goodness, and wealth.

“As they intended to have Zacharias the son of Baruch, one of the most eminent of the citizens, slain, – so what provoked them against him was, that hatred of wickedness and love of liberty which were so eminent in him: he was also a rich man, so that by taking him off, they did not only hope to seize his effects, but also to get rid of a mall [mallet] that had great power to destroy them.” Wars 4.5.4

F. Citizen judges refused to condemn Zacharias. They were punished and Zacharias was ruthlessly killed.

“Now the seventy judges brought in their verdict that the person accused was not guilty, as choosing rather to die themselves with him, than to have his death laid at their doors; hereupon there arose a great clamor of the zealots upon his acquittal, and they all had indignation at the judges for not understanding that the authority that was given them was but in jest. So two of the boldest of them fell upon Zacharias in the middle of the temple, and slew him; and as he fell down dead, they bantered him, and said, “Thou hast also our verdict, and this will prove a more sure acquittal to thee than the other.” They also threw him down from the temple immediately into the valley beneath it. Moreover, they struck the judges with the backs of their swords, by way of abuse, and thrust them out of the court of the temple, and spared their lives with no other design than that, when they were dispersed among the people in the city, they might become their messengers, to let them know they were no better than slaves.” Wars 4.5.4

G. Paranoia ran rampant among the zealots after they eliminated the prominent men of Jerusalem.

“Indeed there was no part of the people but they found out some pretense to destroy them; for some were therefore slain, because they had had differences with some of them; and as to those that had not opposed them in times of peace, they watched seasonable opportunities to gain some accusation against them, and if any one did not come near them at all, he was under their suspicion as a proud man; if any one came with boldness, he was esteemed a contemner of them; and if any one came as aiming to oblige them, he was supposed to have some treacherous plot against them; while the only punishment of crimes, whether they were of the greatest or smallest sort, was death.” Wars 4.6.1

H. Zealots lied to the Idumeans to obtain their support against the two righteous High Priests and citizens.

Jesus of Gamaliel, amazed by the zealots’ cunning said, “Now we cannot but admire at these wretches in their devising such a lie as this against us; for they knew there was no other way to irritate against us men that were naturally desirous of liberty, and on that account the best disposed to fight against foreign enemies, but by framing a tale as if we were going to betray that most desirable thing, liberty.” Wars 4.4.3

I. Josephus documented several incidences of zealot John of Gischala’s malicious slander against him.

- 1) John sought to bring a case against Josephus stating he was not fit to rule Galilee. Wars 2.21.2
- 2) John spread a rumor Josephus was secretly delivering Galilee to the Romans. Wars 2.21.2
- 3) John used lies to try to foment an insurrection against Josephus when he was General of Galilee. Wars 2.21.6-7

TENTATIVE CONCLUSION: Our provisional understanding of Revelation 12 is: The dragon or accuser thrown down from heaven appears to be Jewish authorities who lost power when the war began. Still active “on earth and sea,” however, were the murderous rebel accusers. The rescued woman represents Christians who fled the city before the war began and the rest of her offspring, on whom the dragon made war, appears to be the Jews converted during the war.

Notes

1. Leaders of a nation are sometimes referred to as “heaven” in apocalyptic language.
2. “Devil” means slanderer, accuser, adversary.
3. Zealots maintained they wanted only Yahweh to rule over them and to serve the emperor in any way, whether in worship, slavery, or paying taxes, was apostasy against God. However, they violated all their principles by arrogating these “emperor prerogatives” to themselves.
4. We maintain the New Testament books were written before the war. See video/papers #7 and #14.
5. Please see Adam Maarschalk’s work on the beast: <https://adammaarschalk.com/beast-of-revelation/>