

Revelation 12

The Woman and the Dragon

We are moving into the second half of the book of Revelation today. This second portion opens with an amazing vision of some great wonders of the heavens. We will look at some key players in this period of time.

Before we begin, I want to remind you that the book of Revelation was not written in chronological/ linear order, but in cyclical order. Chapters 4-9 take us all the way through the end of the Tribulation Period. Chapters 10-11 are passages of parenthesis in the action. They reveal some of the “behind the scenes” activities of the Lord. Chapter 11 takes us to the very edge of eternity. It closes with the Lord Jesus claiming His rightful dominion over this universe. Chapters 12-19 take us back through the Tribulation once again. So, we are going to tread once again on ground we have already visited. As one writer said, “In Revelation 4-9 we see the events of the Tribulation through a telescope; in Revelation 12-19 we see things through a microscope.” In other words, we are about to get a more detailed look at the events of this period.

What is said in chapter 12 is essential to a proper understanding of what is going to be said in the rest of the book. If we misinterpret things here, we are going to be off tract the rest of the way through Revelation.

Read pages 133-134 in book

1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.

The identity of this woman has been the subject of debate and false doctrine for centuries. Let me share a few of those with you.

- 1.) Roman Catholics have said that this woman is Mary. There are several reasons why this cannot be true: Mary never ascended in Heaven; Mary gave birth on earth and not in Heaven; Mary cannot be wedged into verse 6.
- 2.) Some believe the woman is the church. However, it was Christ, who gave birth to the church and not the other way around. Also, the church is referred to as the “Bride,” while Israel is referred to as a “woman.”

So, who is this mysterious woman? I believe this woman is none other than the nation of Israel. The clues given in the text tell us all we need to know about her identity.

It says that this woman is "**clothed with the sun**". This speaks of heavenly glory. The "**Moon**" is "under her feet". This speaks of dominion and power. She wears "**a crown**". This speaks of royalty. The "**twelve stars**" speak of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is similar to a dream that Joseph had thousands of years ago, (Gen. 37:9-11).

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2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.

The woman here is in the middle of childbirth. She is in great pain as she tries to bring her child into the world. We are told in verse 5 that her son is to be the ruler of the world, which is a reference to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. God used the nation of Israel to bring His Savior into the world. Jesus Christ is Jewish. The woman is Israel, and the seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus.

Again, Romans 9:4-5 says, "*The people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.* So, it was the nation of Israel that God chose to be the nation through which He sent His Son into the world.

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads.

The next vision is of an enormous "**red dragon**" who has "**seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.**"

Read pages 137-136 in book

Let's break it down symbol by symbol:

1. Red – The color of war and bloodshed. It brings to mind the red horse of Rev. 6:4. This dragon is a killer. He brings death, war, and bloodshed with him when he comes.
2. Dragon – A dragon is a winged serpent. There is no such thing in our natural world. It is a picture of the devil. This dragon is the Devil according to Rev. 12:9.
3. Seven heads – Speak of vast intelligence. We are dealing with a brilliant and wise creature. Eze. 28:12, says of the Devil "*You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*"

4. Ten horns – Horns are a symbol of power. Satan is not all-powerful, but his power is vast. The number ten may refer to a ten-nation kingdom that will be in place during the last days. (Dan 7:7-8, 20-24)

5. Seven crowns – Crowns are a symbol of authority. Satan is still *“the god of this world”*, (2 Cor. 4:4).

4 Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.

The reference to the *“stars out of the sky and flung to earth”* by the tail of the dragon refer back to the fall of Satan. He has not always been an evil creature. In the beginning, he was the ranking angel in Heaven, (Eze. 28:12-15). But pride was found in Lucifer’s heart, and he tried to take God’s throne. He tried to overthrow the Lord, (Isa. 14:12-14). Lucifer sinned and became Satan. He was cast out of Heaven, (Isa. 14:15; Eze. 28:16-18).

It is believed that when Lucifer fell, he drew one-third of the angels (the stars out of the sky) of Heaven into his rebellion. They were cast out of Heaven as well. We call these fallen angels’ demons. They are part of Satan’s kingdom and do his bidding, (Eph. 6:12).

Satan is pictured as standing before Israel waiting for the birth of her child. His intention is to destroy the seed of the woman as soon as He is born. Satan always tries to destroy things in their infancy. Satan had worked from the beginning of time in order to prevent the birth of the Promised Seed of the woman. Obviously, he failed in every attempt to stop the birth of Christ. When the time came for Jesus to enter the world, Satan did everything in his power to slay the Christ child when He was an infant. He moved Herod to destroy all the babies in Bethlehem under the age of two, (Matt. 2:16-18).

5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.

He is called a “male/man child”. The Seed of the Woman came into the world like every other baby. He came from the womb of His mother; but this child unlike any other child that would ever enter the world. You see, this Seed of the Woman (women don’t have seeds, men do) was born without a human father, (Matt. 1:20). His mother was a virgin, (Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:34). He was, and is, God in human flesh, (John 1:1; 14; Phil 2:5-8). The Seed of the Woman is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

His destiny is to *“rule all nations with an iron scepter”*. This man child would come into the world, and He would one day rule the world. We see this prophecy fulfilled in Rev. 19:15. He will rule for several reasons:

First, He will rule because He created this universe and it is His, Col. 1:16-17.

Second, He will rule because He purchased this world with His Own blood when He died in the cross, Rev. 5:9.

Third, He will rule because He alone is worthy to rule and reign, Rev. 4:11.

The man child is pictured being caught up to God and to the throne of God. Here is the good news of the Gospel contained in this verse. Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross, but He did not stay dead! He rose from the dead three days later, (Rev. 1:18). After He arose from the dead, He ascended back to Heaven, (Acts 1:9-11). He sat down at the right hand of His Father in Heaven, (Heb. 1:3; 10:12). He will not stay there forever! He is returning for His Bride (The Church) real soon, (1 Thess. 4:16-18). Then, He will come to defeat His enemies and assume His rightful place as “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”.

6 The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

The Woman flees from the Dragon, and she goes away into the wilderness to hide. We are reminded here that Satan hates the nation of Israel. He has tried to defeat her and destroy her since she first appeared. No other nation on the face of the earth has suffered as much as Israel. No other race has been persecuted as have the Jews. The pages of history are filled with story after story of nations coming against Israel to destroy it.

Just a generation ago a man name Adolph Hitler did his best to destroy the Jew, in what he called “The Final Solution”. He did not destroy them, but he did manage to murder over 6 million in the death camps of Nazi Germany. Josef Stalin killed millions in the gulags of the Soviet Union.

The Jew had suffered, but the Jew has survived! They have survived because of the providence of God. He is not through with Israel. (Jer. 31:35-36). Today the hatred against the Jew is growing stronger as the Muslim nations of the Middle East cry for the destruction of Israel. This hatred will continue to grow into the Tribulation Period. During that Time, the Antichrist will bring persecution upon the nation of Israel and the Jewish people like nothing they have ever experienced. When that persecution comes, Israel will seek refuge. This was prophesied by the Lord Jesus in Matt. 24:15-22. Yet, they will survive that too, for God has a plan for them! Matt. 24:16 tells us that the Jews will flee to the mountains, Rev. 12:6, 14 tells us that the Jews will flee to the wilderness. . So, the place will be in a place of wilderness and mountains. Micah 2:12, pinpoints the place as Bozrah. Today that area is Southern Jordan. (Bozrah means sheepfold).

It will be a place prepared for them by God (Isa. 33:13-16). The Lord will give Israel protection from the anti-Christ and his armies, all energized by Satan and his hatred for Christ and the

people from whom He came. We are told that in this wilderness refuge the people of Israel will be taken care of, by the Lord, for the last half of the Tribulation Period, 1,260 days.

God will see to the needs of His people. He will either use friendly nations or supernatural means, but when the Tribulation ends and Jesus returns, there will be a remnant of the nation of Israel left. These faithful Jews will embrace the Lord Jesus and they will worship Him as their Messiah. (Rom, 11:25).

The Jews are waiting for the coming of the Messiah. What they don't understand is that Messiah has already come, and His name is Jesus. The nation of Israel gave birth to their long-awaited Messiah, yet they failed to recognize Him. John said in John 1:10-11, "*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*" The Messiah died on Calvary's cross, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day and was caught up to heaven where He awaits the time when He will come back to rule and reign upon the earth.

7 Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. 10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. 11 They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

This passage tells us about the final battle in this war since the beginning. In this battle, Satan, the great dragon, is forever cast out of Heaven. This tells us of a day when Satan will finally and eternally be cast out of Heaven.

Let's look at the three names given to Satan/Devil:

1. Dragon — A winged, mythical creature that resembles a serpent with four legs. Dragons are usually associated with fierceness, brutality, violence and destruction. Superstitious people in the dark ages lived in fear of fire-breathing dragons. This image is fitting for Satan. He is a violent character, bent on the total destruction of God's creation. He is responsible for countless deaths and wars.
2. Ancient Serpent — This immediately calls us back to the first appearance of Satan in the Bible, Gen. 3:1. In that passage Satan appears to Eve in the form of a serpent and entices her to commit sin. The image of a serpent is an image of something that is evil, contemptible, detestable, deceitful, underhanded and sly. What a perfect depiction of the devil! He spends his time attempting to deceive everyone he encounters.

3. Devil — The word devil comes from the word "diabolos". It refers to one who is a "slanderer, a false accuser". The word "accuser" means "to make an accusation". It speaks of "a plaintiff who brings up another person on charges. It pictures him as a creature who stands before God accusing the saints of God. This is just what the Bible says he does in Job 1-2. When we fail, he accuses us before the throne of God. He stands before God and points out our sins and our failures. He does not have to lie about us, because we have enough failure and sin in our lives that he has a ready supply of accusations to make. We have a lawyer in Heaven, (so to speak) (1 John 2:1; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). The word "Advocate" in 1 John 2:2 means "one who pleads another's cause before a judge". Jesus Christ, our Advocate stands up to declare us just and justified. He pleads our case by showing the nail prints in His hands and feet. He pleads the blood He shed on the cross as the perfect, eternal payment for all our sins. The Father cries "Case dismissed!" Hallelujah!

4. Satan — This word means "adversary" or "one who stands opposed". This is what Satan is all about. He opposes everything that has to do with God. He opposes everything God is trying to do. He opposes the people of God, the House of God, the Word of God and the plan of God. He stands in opposition to everything that is decent, holy, and right. He is an adversary!

We do not know who initiates this war in Heaven, but we know who wins it. The angelic hosts of Heaven are led in this conflict by an angel named Michael. He is a special angel. He is called and "*archangel*" in Jude 1:9. In Daniel 10:13 he is called "*one of the chief princes*." In Daniel 12:1 he is called "*the great prince*". Michael opposes the onslaught of Satan and his demonic army. He leads the heavenly angels in permanently ousting Satan and His demons from Heaven. When Satan is cast out of Heaven, Heaven literally explodes in praise and thanksgiving. The most feared and hated being in the universe has been forever expelled from Heaven! So, the citizens of Heaven praise God and the Lamb for their power and glory in overcoming the devil!

Then, praise is given to the Tribulation saints who were martyred for their faith. These Christian martyrs are called "overcomers" as well. They used three weapons to defeat the devil.

1. They used the blood of the Lamb — They did not fall for Satan's lies that religion, or their works, would be good enough to earn salvation and the forgiveness of sins. They turned to Jesus by faith and they were washed in the blood of the Lamb. Satan might kill their bodies, but he could not touch their souls (Matt. 10:28). They had been redeemed and they obtained eternal victory! (Have you been washed in the blood?)

2. They used the word of their testimony — They stuck to their guns! They would not renounce their faith in Jesus. The word "*testimony*" means "*report*". They claimed to be redeemed followers of Jesus and they never backed down from that report. Satan may have killed their bodies, but his defeat was sealed with every death!

3. They used their supreme love for Jesus — Even when they were threatened with death they would not back down. They loved their Redeemer more than they loved their own lives.

They would rather die than deny Him. They stood their ground and courageously faced a martyr's death, knowing that when life left the body here, it would continue forever in His presence.

This passage not only reveals Satan through his names, but also through his nature. One of the most common activities of the devil. In v. 9 We are told that he leads the whole world astray. That is Satan's mission! He is always on the prowl for souls to deceive (1 Peter 5:8). He confuses people and blinds people to the truth, Light, things of Christ, and, he is very good at what he does! He can come into our midst even masquerading as an angel of light. (2 Cor. 11:13-14). Satan is a deceiver, and he always has been. When he came to Eve in Eden came as being crafty and shrewd. Satan deceived Eve and he has been deceiving people ever since. He will continue to weave his web of lies and half-truths until he is cast into the Lake of Fire.

12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

Satan does not take being cast out of Heaven very well. He now turns his wrath to the only place he can still operate: earth. The inhabitants of the earth are about to feel the unfiltered fury of an angry Devil. He knows that he only has a limited time before the eternal plan of the Lord is finished. He knows that he is facing certain judgment. Since he cannot vent his anger toward Heaven and God any longer, he turns his hatred earthward and attacks the people living upon the earth.

Note: Satan is in the 2nd Heaven, (2 Cor. 12:2), and not in the presence of a Holy God. Sin is not allowed into Heaven (Rev. 21:27).

13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. 15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.

The primary object of Satan's wrath becomes the chosen people of God, the nation of Israel. As we saw in verses 1-6, Satan hates Israel and does everything in his power to destroy that nation. In these verses, we are given a few more details of that terrible time.

We are told that chased or to pursue the woman (Israel). It refers to a hostile pursuit. Satan goes after Israel with a vengeance. He pursues them with violent destruction on his mind! We are told again that they are divinely protected. The image of eagle's wings is symbolic of God's personal protection of His chosen people, (Ex. 19:4), (Ps. 91:4).

God brings Israel into a place of safety that He has prepared for them (S/ Jordan). There, He will feed them and care for them for three and one-half years. Satan will be prevented from totally destroying the nation of Israel!

V- 15 depicts the attacks of Satan being like a great flood of water. We are told in verse 16 that the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river/flood. This may mean that some friendly nations of the earth, Gentile people, will reach out to Israel and take them in and help them during those dark days. Or, it may mean that the earth will absorb the blows Satan intended for Israel. One thing is clear; God has a plan for Israel and Satan will not thwart that plan! God is sovereign and He will do as He has said He will do concerning all things, especially the nation of Israel!

V- 17 teaches us that there will be a faithful remnant of Israel during the dark days of the Tribulation. There will be a multitude of Jews saved through the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish preachers and the two witnesses who will preach in Jerusalem. These redeemed Jews will embrace the Messiah and they will come back to the Word of God. They will be persecuted for their faith, but a remnant will be saved. God will have the final say. And He says that Satan loses, and God's people win! Hallelujah!

In this passage we have learned that the devil, that evil being who has fought against God, His plan and His people for thousands of years will be defeated. We learn that the one who has accused us when we fail and has condemned us by name in Heaven will one day be cast out of heaven. We will learn later that his path will end in the flame of the Lake of Fire.