

Revelation Chapter 12

12:1-5 A great Wonder in heaven

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God to his throne.”

The woman of this passage is not the church, or Mary, as some have stated. When one compares scripture with scripture as we're supposed to do, it is very easy to identify the woman of this passage. This woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and crown of twelve stars upon her head is clearly the nation Israel. Here's how you know:

A. In Genesis 37:5-11 we notice these things in comparison to Revelation 12:1.

(1) Joseph dreamed a dream and in it he sees the sun and the moon and eleven stars make obeisance to him. They bowed in subjection to Joseph! Verse 9.

(2) When he told this dream to his family, his family clearly understood its interpretation and his father Jacob rebuked him for it saying, *“I Shall I (corresponding to the sun) and thy mother (corresponding to the moon), and thy brethren (corresponding to the eleven stars) indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?”* Verse 10. You see, Jacob was pictured by the sun, Rachel was pictured by the moon, and Joseph's eleven brethren were pictured by the stars. This is very clear. This family was the nation Israel.

(3) When Joseph sees this vision he is the spectator and is the one being bowed to, and therefore he is not pictured as a star. Here in Revelation 12:1 John sees the nation Israel, and Joseph is included as the twelfth star. Hence you have twelve stars in her crown. This nation, this woman, is clothed with the sun (fathered by Jacob) has the moon under her feet (mothered by Rachel) and the twelve stars correspond to the twelve sons of Jacob, (the tribes of Israel).

B. This woman John sees is with child and is about to give birth. She is in labour pains. This is descriptive of the many years of Israel's sorrow and suffering as she went through her wars and captivities, being destined to, at a particular

time, bring into the world a man child who would rule the world with a rod of iron. However, he was first caught up unto God and to his throne, verse 5. It is not difficult for me to understand that this is a clear reference to the birth of Jesus Christ. At the appointed time, a virgin daughter of Israel, Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost and gave birth to the Messiah who will one day rule this earth. His being caught up into heaven to God's throne is clearly a reference to his death and resurrection followed by his ascension into heaven, Revelation 2:21.

C. There appeared another wonder in heaven. John saw a great red dragon that has seven heads and ten horns which seven crowns upon his heads. This dragon's tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven down to the earth and he then stood before the woman of verse 1 and 2 to devour her child as soon as it was born. There can be no doubt as to the identity of this dragon, it is the devil! Consider these things:

(1) The dragon is Satan, chapter 12:9, 13:2,4, 20:2, Isaiah 27:1, Job 41. The dragon is red because of the blood he has shed up through the years.

(2) The dragon is said to have seven heads. Neither is this difficult to understand when once you understand that the dragon is Satan. Satan has headed up seven great governments in the earth up through history. These governments have been anti-God, and anti-Israel. History helps us identify them:

(A) Egypt - The book of Exodus and Ezekiel 29: 1-3 identifies Egypt as a dragon.

It is the first great nation through which Satan ruled to the hurt of Israel.

(B) Assyria - The next great power to enslave Israel, 11 Kings 18:13.

(C) Babylon - Another power to enslave Israel, Jeremiah 51:34.

(D) Media Persian - Also held Israel captive, Daniel 5:28-30.

(E) Greece - The next one to hold Israel captive, Daniel 8:21-22, 10:20, 11:2. (f.) Rome - The one controlling Israel at the first coming of Christ.

(G) Antichrist Kingdom - Still to come. This is also known as Revived Rome.

This will be the seventh head of the dragon.

(3) The dragon or Satan is said to have ten horns. We will study more about these horns in chapter 17:12-14. They are kings which have received no kingdom as yet, but will receive power as kings in one hour with the Antichrist. They will give their power and strength to the Antichrist and help him accomplish his goals.

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(4) The dragon's tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven down to earth. And then he stood ready to devour the child (Christ) that the nation Israel bought into the world. The things to notice about this are:

(A) This references Satan's historic rebellion against God and his being cast out of heaven, Ezekiel 28:11-19, Isaiah 14:12-15, Revelation 12:7-9.

(B) The stars of heaven mentioned here are a reference to the angels that joined Satan's rebellion. As many as one third rebelled against God with him. Angels are called stars, Job 38:7, Judges 5:20, Revelation 1:20, Revelation 9:1.

(C) The fallen angels, as were those who didn't fall, were called sons of God in the old testament and they repeatedly tried to corrupt the human race to point that Christ could not come, Genesis 6:1-6. Notice verse 4, "in those days, and after that"

(D) The devil tried to destroy Christ as soon as he was born, Matthew 2:13-20.

(5) The dragon was unsuccessful. And she (Israel) brought forth a man child (Jesus) who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Millennium, Revelation 2:27, 3:9,21, 20: 1-6, Isaiah 11: 1-12), and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne. (Christ's resurrection from the grave and ascension into heaven, Acts 1:9, Hebrews 1:3.

12:6 A Woman on earth

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

Now, to have a proper understanding of this passage you will need to first understand that there is a gap of time between verse 5 and verse 6. A gap of time that has already lasted some two thousand years. Verse 5 speaks of the ascension of Christ into heaven. Verse 6 concerns an event that will come to pass during the last half of the coming tribulation. Such gaps of time are not unusual in scripture. God sometimes spoke of the first coming and second coming of Christ in the same chapter from one verse to another, Isaiah 11:1-3 (first coming and earthly ministry), Isaiah 11:4-12 (second coming and Millennium.) Isaiah 61:1 and verse 2 till the comma (first coming and earthly ministry), Isaiah 61:2, from the comma through verse 11 (second coming and Millennium). Now, understanding that Revelation 12:6 references an event that will come to pass in the tribulation we notice these things:

A. The woman fled into the wilderness. This woman is already identified as Israel, verses 1,2,5.

B. The devil, being unsuccessful in destroying Christ, persecutes the nation Israel. He has done this up through history, but, this particular persecution will be a worse one than any time before and you know it is to be in the future,

during the last half of the tribulation because of the length of time it is to last, 1260 days. Compare chapter 11:2, 12:13-14.

C. The wilderness is not identified. Wherever it is we know that God preserved historical Israel for forty years in the wilderness and he will have no problem doing the same for that nation during the last half of the tribulation. This is the nation that's taken care of, not the 144,000, they, along with multitudes of others will be killed by the Antichrist, verse 17.

12:7-9 A War in heaven

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

A. John sees that there was war in heaven. Michael the arch angel, the prince that stands up for Israel, Daniel 10:13-21, 12:1, leads the good angels of God in battle against the devil and his angels. This seems to be sometime during the first half of the tribulation or either right around the middle of the tribulation one. I say that because it is during the last half of the tribulation that all hell breaks loose upon the earth and this would better allow for the events described in verses 6, 12, and 14, and Revelation 9:1, 11:2,7, 13:3-4.

B. When Satan and his angels rebelled against God historically, Ezekiel 28:11-19, and Isaiah 14:12-15, there were many angels involved. Verses 3-4 indicate as many as one third of the angels joined him in his futile fight. When he was cast out he was left to roam the earth and heavens as a terror to mankind, but as a defeated foe, Job chapters 1 and 2. But some of those following him have been confined and chained up, Jude 6, 11 Peter 2:4, Revelation 9:1-19. But literally multitudes of others are loose to roam the earth along with Satan. Many are disembodied spirits seeking bodies to possess, and many have some kind of spiritual body. During the coming tribulation the devil will mobilize his followers and launch another attack against heaven. Satan will lead his angels against Michael and his angels.

C. Satan will not succeed this second time either. He prevails not and neither is their place found any more in heaven. No longer will the devil be permitted to enter heaven as he is today for his diabolical purposes of accusing the brethren as he did Job, Job 1-2. He will be cast out and his angels with him.

D. Satan has deceived the whole world for many years now, 11 Corinthians 4:4.

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12:10-12 A Worship service in heaven

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down among you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

This final casting out of Satan and his angels from heaven opens the way for the soon coming Millennium. Because of this heaven burst into praise. Loud voices praise God that salvation (deliverance) and strength and the kingdom of God and the power of Christ can at last be fully realized. No longer can he enter heaven and accuse us before God. The inhabitants of heaven also praise God because of the fact that the tribulational saints have overcome Satan by the blood of Christ and the bold word of their testimony for him. It is cause for rejoicing among the dwellers of heaven when a saint on earth will sooner die than deny the faith and turn their backs upon Christ. The ones of verse 11 are tribulational saints, Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17, 11:7, 12:12,17, 13:7, Matthew 24:13. You can clearly see the reference to their enduring until the end in this passage. As you can in others such as Revelation 14:12, 15:2.

12:12-17 A Woe upon earth

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

With the casting out of Satan the heavens can rejoice, however the earth must mourn.

A. When Satan is cast out of heaven unto the earth he then appears as the Antichrist who breaks his covenant with Israel and the world and begins earth's worse ever blood bath, Revelation 11:7, 13:3-18.

B. The dragon, (Satan) persecutes the woman (the nation Israel) that brought forth the man child (Christ) into the world.

C. God supernaturally protects the woman (the nation Israel). Her protection is described as having been given two wings of a great eagle so that she could fly into the wilderness, to her place, and there she is nourished for a time, times, and a half of time. A time is a year, times is two years, and a half of time is a half of a year, Daniel 4:16, 7:25,12:7,11, and we understand this because there can be no doubt that Revelation 12:6 which describes the last half of the tribulation as 1,260 days is the same thing and at the same time as Revelation 12:14 which describes the last half of the tribulation as a time, times, and a half of a time. The flight mentioned here is probably a reference to the masses of Israel escaping into the wilderness by airplane. Compare Matthew 24:20. The serpent is of course a reference to Antichrist possessed by the devil.

D. The serpent (Antichrist possessed by Satan) cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman (the nation Israel), that he might destroy her. This does not seem to be a literal thing, the answer lies in Isaiah 59:19, “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” Without doubt this is a reference to the armies of Antichrist being dispatched to destroy Israel.

E. The armies of Antichrist are unsuccessful because the earth opens up her mouth and swallows the flood of armies that have been dispatched. God has opened the earth before in order to swallow up his enemies, Numbers 16:30-35, and he will do it again during the coming tribulation.

F. When the Antichrist fails in his attempts to destroy the nation Israel. Satan is very angry at her and goes to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. This is doubtless those of the 144,000 Jews that have been sealed for service and are spreading the word of God. They would not be hidden away and protected for they are God's preachers of the gospel of the kingdom, they are the ones on the front line winning others. The devil hates them vehemently and intensifies his slaughter of them.