



THE BOOK OF REVELATION – Chapter 12 Pt.1

God's Message To A Sleeping Church

“THE GREAT PERSONAGES OF THE END TIMES”

Revelation chapter 11:19 closed with another dramatic incident. John wrote ... *Then God's temple in heaven was opened.* At the same time John was able to look into the temple where he saw **the ark of His covenant**. **This refers to the Heavenly temple rather than to a temple on earth.** The corresponding results in the earth ... however, included **lightning...thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm** (Cp. 8:5). The dramatic introduction of the events relating to the seventh trumpet concluded here and will be resumed in chapter 16. Remember, chronologically the time was close to Christ's second coming.

Now that the fall of the Jewish nation has been detailed in Revelation 11, our attention is turned to the next object of God's judgment.

Revelation 12:1-6 (NKJV) ... **“(1) 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. (2) Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. (3) And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. (4) 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. (5) 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. (6) 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.”**

THE SEVEN GREAT PERSONAGES OF THE END TIMES (CHAPS. 12-15)

Though the seventh trumpet was recorded in 11:15 as sounding, the details of what will come out of the seventh trumpet are not revealed until chapter 16. **Accordingly, chapters 12-15 view the prophecies of the end time from another perspective ... and give us information and introduce **the great personages** who are involved in the second half of the seven-year period.**

Seven Personages That Appear In Chapters 12-13:

- (1) **a Woman clothed with the sun** – representing Israel (12:1-2);
- (2) **the red dragon with seven heads and 10 horns** – representing Satan (12:3-4);
- (3) **the male Child** – representing Christ (12:5-6);
- (4) **the archangel Michael** – casting Satan out of heaven (12:7-12);
- (5) **the offspring of the woman** – persecuted by the dragon (12:13-17);
- (6) **the beast out of the sea** – the future world dictator (13:2-10);
- (7) **the beast out of the earth** – the false prophet (13:11-18).

IMPORTANT: These chapters do not advance the narrative chronologically ... but present events and situations that are **concurrent** with the soundings of the trumpets. Chronological progress of events resumes in chapter 16.

The Seventh trumpet (11:15) ushers in the Bowl judgments (15-16), but in the intervening chapters (12-14), an interlude ... John saw several signs regarding the cosmic warfare in Revelation -- the conflict between God and Satan. He saw the source of all sin, evil, persecution, and suffering on the earth, and he understood why the great battle between the forces of God and Satan must soon take place. In these chapters ... the nature of evil is exposed, and Satan is revealed in all his wickedness!

In Revelation 12:1-6 ... the reader is given a description of the scene; the rest of the chapter (12:7-17) amplifies various parts of that basic scene. The picture of warfare between good and evil -- between God and Satan -- is found in 12:1-6. The next three sections ... 12:7-12,13-17; and chapter 13 -- expand the story of 12:1-6.

- Much like a symphony where the first movement sets the theme and the rest of the movements supply variations on the theme ... so the first six verses set the theme and the next three “*movements*” supply the variations. **The scenes focus on three characters -- the dragon, the woman, and the child.**
- The first scene records ... the birth of the child (12:1-6), the second highlights the expulsion of the dragon from heaven (12:7-12), and the third shows the dragon attacking the woman and her children (12:13-17).

1. THE FIRST PERSONAGE: A WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN (12:1-2)

The first great personage to appear was a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars on her head. She was called a great and wondrous sign. Undoubtedly the sign provoked wonder. This was the first of a series of events called “*signs*” or “*miracles*”. As signs they were symbols of something that God was about to reveal and usually contained an element of prophetic warning. Though this sign was seen in heaven ... the events which followed obviously occurred on earth.

The woman symbolized Israel, as indicated by Gen. 37:9-11, where the sun and the moon referred to Jacob and Rachel, Joseph's parents. **The stars in the woman's crown clearly related to the 12 sons of Jacob ... and identified the woman as Israel fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant.** The symbolism, while not referring specifically to Mary, the mother of Christ ... **points to Israel as the source (the earthly lineage) of Jesus Christ.** Thus, it does not refer to the Church.

NOTE: Wicked women are sometimes used to represent false religions, as in the case of Jezebel (2:20), the apostate church of the end time as a prostitute (17:1-7,15,18), and Israel as the unfaithful wife of Yahweh (Hosea 2:2-13). The church by contrast ... is pictured as the virgin bride (2 Cor. 11:2), the Lamb's wife (Rev. 19:7).

The woman was said to be pregnant and about to give birth (12:2). While in some sense this may be fulfilled in the birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary ... **the context seems to refer to the emerging nation of Israel in its suffering prior to the second coming of Christ.** This is further supported by the verses which follow.

2. THE SECOND PERSONAGE: THE RED DRAGON WITH THE 7 HEADS AND 10 HORNS (12:3-4)

The second wonder (*semeion*, "sign"; cp. v. 1) appeared in heaven, though it actually related to scenes on earth. **It was a great red dragon, having 7 heads and 10 horns, and 7 crowns on his heads.** From similar descriptions in Daniel 7:7-8, 24 and Revelation 13:1, **this beast represents Satan's control over world empires in the Great Tribulation.**

Revelation 12:9 identifies the dragon as Satan. *The color red* ... might indicate the bloodshed related to this period. The 10 horns presented symbolically the 10 kings (see Daniel 7:24) who reigned simultaneously with the coming world ruler and who were mentioned both in Daniel 7:7 and Revelation 13:1.

The casting down of a third of the stars out of the sky ... seems to imply satanic power which extended to the heavens and the earth. Satan was seen here to extend his power over those who opposed him spiritually or politically. The dragon's attempt to devour the newborn Child (12:4) ... seemed to point to Satan's attempts to destroy the Infant Jesus. Satanic opposition to Israel and especially to the messianic line is clear in both Testaments.

3. THE THIRD PERSONAGE: THE MALE-CHILD, CHRIST (12:5-6)

Verse 5 uses the language reserved for the Messiah. When the Child - described as a Son, a male Child, who will rule all the nations with a rod of iron (*iron scepter*) - **was born ... He was caught up to God and to His throne. The Child obviously is Jesus Christ** (Psalm 2:9; Rev. 19:15). The catching up of the Child refers to the Ascension.

In Summary ... The dragon (Satan) is attempting to devour the child (Christ). However, the Christ is born and caught up to God and to his throne. Satan attempts to kill the Christ, but Christ is raised from the dead and ascends to the Father. **The woman (the remnant) flees for protection in a place prepared by God. The spiritual nation, the true people of God, are preserved for 1260 days.** We learned in Revelation 11 that 1260 days is the same as 42 months, which is the same as **a time, times, and half a time.** This is referring to ... a limited period of distress, persecution, and tribulation. Matthew (24:16) referred to the flight of Israel at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (cp. Mark 13:14). The people of God are under attack by Satan, but they (*the true remnant*) are spiritually secure!

NEXT ... REVELATION CHAPTER 12 Pt. 2 ... (READ: Revelation 12:7-17)

REVELATION 12

THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, AND THE WAR IN HEAVEN

I. THE WOMAN & THE CHILD (12:1-6)

- Clothed with the sun**
Glorious, radiant, and divinely protected.
- Crown of 12 stars**
The people of God – the 12 tribes and the Church.
- Labor pains**
The birth of the Messiah and the birth pains of God's plan.
- A male Child**
Jesus Christ – the promised King who will rule all nations.
- Caught up to God and His throne**
Christ's ascension and His protection.
- The woman flees into the wilderness**
God's people protected during tribulation – 1,260 days.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon.”
– Revelation 12:7

II. THE DRAGON & THE WAR (12:7-12)

- The great red dragon**
Satan – ancient serpent, accuser, and deceiver.
- Seven heads, ten horns**
Complete authority and global power.
- War in heaven**
Satan and his angels cast out by Michael.
- Accuser thrown down**
Satan no longer has access to accuse the saints before God (Job 1:6-12; Zech 3:1).
- Great rejoicing**
Heaven celebrates the victory of Christ.
- Great woe on earth**
Satan knows his time is short and intensifies his rage.

THE CENTRAL MESSAGE

Revelation 12 reveals God's redemptive plan from eternity past to eternity future. It shows the Messiah, the Church, the enemy, and the spiritual warfare behind human history.

KEY SYMBOLIC TRUTHS

- God's people are never without protection.
- Satan is real, defeated in heaven, but active on earth.
- Jesus is the rightful King over all nations.
- The Church is part of God's eternal plan.
- Spiritual warfare is behind earthly events.
- Satan's time is limited – he is furious because he knows his end is near.

VICTORY BELONGS TO CHRIST!

THE 4 MAJOR SCENES OF REVELATION 12

1
The Woman & the Child
(12:1-6)

2
Satan Seeks to Devour
(12:3-4)

3
War in Heaven
Satan is Cast Out
(12:7-9)

4
The Woman Flees
The Dragon Pursues the Rest
(12:10-12,17)

THE DRAGON TARGETS THREE THINGS

- The Child (Jesus)**
He tried to destroy Him at His birth (Matthew 2).
- The Woman (The Church)**
He persecutes God's people throughout history.
- The Rest of Her Seed**
Those who keep the commandments and have the testimony of Jesus.

POWERFUL CROSS REFERENCES

- Genesis 3:15 – The woman's seed will crush the serpent.
- Daniel 7:21-22 – The saints are given the kingdom.
- Matthew 2 – Herod seeks to devour the Child.
- John 8:44 – Satan the murderer from the beginning.

VICTORY DECLARED 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.”
– Revelation 12:10

APPLICATION FOR TODAY

- Stand firm in faith – do not fear the enemy.
- Live holy – the dragon is watching for compromise.
- Know your identity – you are protected and chosen.
- Keep the testimony of Jesus – it overcomes the enemy.
- Look up – our King reigns and victory is assured!

THE DRAGON IS DEFEATED. † CHRIST IS VICTORIOUS. † THE CHURCH IS SECURE.

“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” – 1 Corinthians 15:57

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