

**The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Message #12**  
**Revelation 12 – The Woman & the Dragon**  
**(9/27/09 PM)**

Revelation is not necessarily in chronological order. The judgments appear to advance the narrative. (Refer to overview handout)

We ended last week's message with John's vision of the Ark of the Covenant in the heavenly Temple. We said that this will be an encouraging sign for Israel who will be going through great persecution. Chapter 12 begins with Israel.

1. The Woman Clothed with the Sun (1-2)

***The First of Seven Symbolic Personages Presented In Chapters 12-13***

John introduces this vision with "Now a great sign appeared in heaven". This is the first of seven uses of the word sign or signs. John is using a symbol that points to a reality. MacArthur, "The literal approach to interpreting Scripture allows for normal use of symbolic language, but understands that it points to a literal reality."

• **The woman symbolizes the nation of Israel**

The woman does not picture the Virgin Mary. The woman does not picture the church. All of these symbolic descriptions have their roots in the Old Testament. The sun is a picture of Israel's exalted status.

Deuteronomy 7:6, "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth."

Kroll, "In verse 1 Israel is seen, not as she has been or is now, but as she will be. It is the nation as God had intended her to be, a condition that will be fulfilled in the reign of her Messiah."

The moon and stars is taken from Joseph's dream recorded in Genesis 37:9-11.

The word "garland" is *stephanos* which means crown. She has a crown with twelve stars for the twelve tribes. The picture of a woman "being with child" is also imagery found in the Old Testament for Israel. Isaiah 26:17, "As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, when she draws near the time of her delivery, so have we been in Your sight, O Lord."

The labor pains symbolize the struggles of the nation awaiting the birth of their Messiah.

**Israel Has Suffered More than Any Other Nation**

2. The Fiery Red Dragon (3-4)

***Clearly Identified As Satan in Verse 9***

"And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon".

Satan appears as a dragon 13 times in Revelation. Red is the color of blood and is associated with death. Jesus said of Satan "He was a murderer from the beginning", John 8:44.

• **The seven heads are world empires**

"Having seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his heads."

Diadems are crowns, horns in scripture symbolize power. Some see them as the seven succeeding empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Rome, and Antichrist's 10 nation final world empire. Others see the imagery taken from Daniel 7:7-8. When Daniel saw the fourth beast it had 10 horns. "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before

whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.”

As we saw last week Satan is the real power behind the world's governments.

### **Satan Himself Will Be the Real Power behind the Kingdom of the Antichrist**

- **The third of the stars are fallen angels**

“His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.”

Verses 7 & 9 identify them as “angels”. This most likely looks back to the original fall of Lucifer recorded in Isaiah 14:12-15 & Ezekiel 28:12-17. Luke 10:18, And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

Satan is God's archenemy and therefore Israel's archenemy. In the Garden of Eden God predicted the coming of a redeemer to crush Satan. Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

Satan here is pictured as trying to stop the Redeemer from coming into the world. Satan is the originator of anti-Semitism. He tried to destroy Israel on many occasions through other nations and individuals such as Haman. He tried to kill the baby Jesus through Herod. He tried to have Jesus killed by the people of Israel during His ministry.

### **The Cross Appeared to Be Satan's Greatest Victory but It Was His Ultimate Defeat**

Hebrews 2:14, “...that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

### 3. The Male Child (5-6)

#### ***The Lord Jesus Christ***

- **His identity is confirmed by prophecy**

“Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.”

We saw last week that verse 18 also tied in with this passage, Psalm 2. (6-9) “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron...”

### **Between His Incarnation and Coronation was His Glorification**

“And Her child was caught up to God and His throne.”

- **His people will be protected by God**

(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.”

Satan is still trying to thwart Christ's coming kingdom. He will vent His hatred upon the Jewish people in the Tribulation. The 2,260 day time reference refers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Tribulation.

Matthew 24:15-22, “Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "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.”

### **God Will Supernaturally Preserve a Remnant of His People**

#### 4. The Archangel, Michael (7-12)

##### ***The Cosmic Battle***

“And war broke out in heaven”

There has always been spiritual warfare in the heavenly sphere. The word “heaven” is *ouranos*. It is used for both the atmosphere, the air and for the third heaven where God dwells. Satan is called “the prince of the power of the air”, Ephesians 2:2. Paul spoke of this spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 6:12, “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.”

Kroll, “Satan was cast from the third heaven before creation and is now cast down to the earth from the second heaven.”

- **Michael is the special angelic guardian of Israel**

Daniel 12:1, “At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.”

### **Israel Will Need Michael's Assistance Because the Antichrist Will Be Indwelt by Satan**

2 Thessalonians 2:9, “The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.”

Revelation 13:2, “The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.”

- **Michael's victory will confine Satan's activities to earth for the last half of the Tribulation Period**

(9-10) “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.”

Note the titles of Satan along with that of the dragon:

- a. The Serpent of old – looks back to the Garden of Eden
- b. The Devil – slanderer or accuser
- c. Satan – the Hebrew word for adversary
- d. Deceiver – to lead astray, to mislead
- e. Accuser of our brethren

The loud voice of praise is most a shout of triumph from the martyred saints in heaven.

(11) “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.”

John again refers to future events as if they already happened because they are so certain. Satan will now vent his wrath upon believers on earth. He may take some of their lives but all Christians overcome him by trusting in the shed blood of Christ for their salvation.

(12) “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.” The word “rage” refers to violent outbursts of wrath. “Satan is now like a caged lion, enraged beyond words by the limitations now placed upon is freedom”, John Phillips.

### **The Joy of Heaven Is the Grief of Earth**

#### 5. The Persecution of Israel (13-17)

##### ***The Final Holocaust***

(13) “Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.”

When Satan is cast to the earth he will most likely indwell the Antichrist causing him to defile the temple. When he declares himself to be God he will be led by Satan to begin an all out assault upon the Jewish people. The word “persecuted” means to pursue. As seen in verse 6 God will dramatically intervene.

(14) “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 time references all point to the Great Tribulation**

Israel will probably be provided for by both God and man. God had the birds feed Elijah. Also God will reward believing Gentiles for helping His people. This is seen in the judgment of the nations at the end of the Tribulation.

Matthew 25:45, Then He will answer them, saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.”

God will also use natural forces to preserve His people.

(15-16) “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. 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.”

This could be an actual flood or an army coming after them like a flood. Either way God uses possibly an earthquake or some other event to destroy them. This is reminiscent of the destruction of Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea.

### **Satan Who Lost the War in Heaven Now Makes War against the Saints on Earth**

(17) “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.”

This could refer to both believing Jews and Gentiles. It could also mean that Jews who turn to Christ will be the special target of Satan’s attack.