

Revelation - Chapter Twelve

Chapter summary - *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 introduce the great personages who are involved in the second half of the seven-year period.*

Many have pointed out that seven personages 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 [the Roman Prince] (13:2-10); (7) the beast out of the earth, the false prophet [the Jewish Antichrist] (13:11-18). 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 16.¹

[In this specific chapter], John now sees visions that are clearly symbolic in nature. A pregnant woman is pursued by “an enormous red dragon.” The woman gives birth to a son destined to rule the nations with an iron scepter, a clear reference to the Messiah (cf. Ps. 2:9). After God snatches the child up to heaven, the woman flees into the desert, to hide for the 1,260 days mentioned in 11:3 (12:1-6). John also sees war in heaven, with the great dragon, Satan, hurled to earth with his followers (vv. 7-9). This triumph is celebrated by a voice in heaven, which also depicts Satan’s fury (vv. 10-12). In frustration Satan pursues the “woman who had given birth to the child” and also makes war on all the saints (vv. 13-17).²

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IV. the vision of the Final Days, (Chs. 6-22)

C. **SOME MAJOR PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAMS** -
(12:1-14:20)

1. **The woman and the dragon, (12:1-6) - "THE DRAGON, THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS AND THE KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR!"**

 **INTERPRETATION:**

¹ **Now** (at the sounding of the seventh trumpet), **a great sign** (an extraordinary wonder, i.e., the most amazing thing), **appeared in**

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

¹ Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Library System.

² Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, Logos Library System.

(God's), **heaven: a woman** (which represents Israel as a nation), **clothed with the sun** (shall be made the prominent nation as promised through the Abrahamic Covenant, through whom a King will be established for eternity [Jesus Christ), **with the moon under her feet** (she shall be as a nation, a light unto all of the other nations of the world, concerning the gospel), **and on her head a garland of twelve stars**, (as the nation of Israel is made up of 12 tribes).

² **Then** (the nation of Israel) **being with child** (Mary, bringing forth the Christ Child), **she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth**, (Mary's time to give birth came upon her in Bethlehem).

³ **And** (as Mary is about to give birth to Israel's Messiah and the world's Savior), **another sign** (another extraordinary wonder), **appeared in heaven: behold, a great** (intimidating, fierce), **fiery red** (signifying the murderous characteristics of the) **dragon** (the devil himself), **having seven heads and ten horns** (signifying the 10 nations of the revised Roman Empire, three of which rise up against the Roman Prince, but are subdued leaving seven heads of the government [cp., Dan. 7:8, 24]; or seven heads may be represent the seven mountains in Revelation 17:9), **and seven diadems on his heads**, (signifying their prominence and power during this time).

⁴ **His** (the devil's), **tail drew a third of the stars of heaven** (a third of all the created angels, [Dan. 8:10]), **and threw them to the earth**, (he pulled them all together to concentrate their demonic power upon the people and events taking place upon the earth). **And the dragon stood before the woman** (Israel), **who was ready to give birth, to devour** (destroy), **her Child** (the Messiah, Redeemer of the human race and world itself), **as soon as it was born**, (as the redeemer promised to take Satan's kingdom back from him as well as cast him into eternal torment, [Satan's attempt to destroy Christ was through Herod, but his attempt failed]).

⁵ **She** (Mary), **bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron**, (who will dominate all of his subjects; physical and spiritual—smashing all who resist Him, [Psa. 2:9]). **And her Child was caught up to God and His throne**, (referring to the ascension of Jesus Christ after His death—despite all of the devil's attempts to destroy Him).³

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³ Throughout Old Testament history, Satan tried to prevent the birth of the Redeemer. There was always a "dragon" standing by, waiting to destroy Israel or the ancestors of the Messiah. Pharaoh is called a "dragon" (Ezek. 29:3), and so is Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 51:34). At one critical point, the royal line was limited to one little boy (2 Kings 11:1–3). When Jesus Christ was born, Satan used King Herod to try to destroy Him (Matt. 2). Satan thought that he had succeeded when he used Judas to betray the Lord and hand Him over to be crucified. But the Cross was actually Satan's defeat! "And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11). (Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System)

⁶ **Then** (since the ascension of Christ and after the blowing of the seventh trumpet), **the woman fled** (from the devil), **into the wilderness** (to escape the Satan's attempt to annihilate every Jew upon the earth in his quest to gain the victory over Christ to), **where she has a place** (divinely), **prepared by God** (to preserve the nation Israel and bring the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant), **that they should feed her** (that they should find protection, food and shelter), **there one thousand two hundred and sixty days**. (for 3 ½ years, [Mat. 24:16]).

2. The angels and the war in heaven, (12:7-12) - "THE DRAGON IS BOUNCED OUT OF HEAVEN!"

1) Michael defeats the dragon, (7-9)

INTERPRETATION:

⁷ **And** (after Israel's safety had been secured), **war broke out in heaven**: (the archangel), **Michael** (who seems to have been given the responsibility of protecting Israel, cp., Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1 [*Gabriel is the spokesperson*]), **and his** (command of holy), **angels fought with** (against Satan), **the dragon; and the dragon and his** (command of fallen, demon), **angels fought** (against Michael and the holy angels),

⁸ **but they** (the devil and demons), **did not prevail** (win the battle), **nor was a place found** (i.e., a provision made), **for them** (to be), **in heaven any longer**.

⁹ **So** (because God would not allow the sinful fallen angels in heaven any longer), **the great dragon was cast out** (expelled from heaven once and for all), **that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who** (beginning with Adam and Eve), **deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels** (the angels that followed him into sin becoming demons), **were cast out with him**.

F APPLICATION:

- In Jude 9 we see Michael taking a different approach to the devil. God tells us that, "*Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"*"

Michael was not quick to slander or to try to put the devil in his place. It wasn't because he didn't have adequate power to do so, as we see in Revelation 12. It was because Michael didn't have divine authority to do so. We as believers often times have the power to put others down and to try to put them in their place, too many times though, we do not have the authority to do so. We as believers must not go beyond the limits of our authority. To do so is to function outside of God's will.

2) The Dragon's time is short, (10-12)

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INTERPRETATION:

¹⁰ **Then** (when Satan was expelled from heaven), **I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation** (not of souls, but from the tyranny of the devil through the soon culmination of God's plan for man and the earth), **and strength** (through a grand demonstration of God's strength), **and the** (millennial), **kingdom of our God** (will result), **and the power of His Christ have come** (as Christ will reign during the millennial kingdom), **for the accuser of our brethren** (Satan), **who accused them** (believers), **before our God day and night** (continually), **has been cast down**, (at last expelled from heaven and can no longer accuse them).

¹¹ **"And they** (the brethren), **overcame** (gained the victory over), **him** (the devil), **by the blood of the Lamb** (which is efficacious in paying any and all of man's sin, once and for all), **and by the word of their testimony** (proclaiming their saving faith in Christ alone), **and they did not love their lives to the death**, (nothing could make them recant their faith, not even the threat of death).

¹² **"Therefore** (in light of Satan's expulsion), **rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them**, (that Satan is no longer in them)! (But), **Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea**, (those of you who yet live upon the earth)! **For the devil** (having no choice), **has come down to you, having great wrath** (he is filled with boiling rage, at being thrown out of heaven), **because he knows that he has a short time**, (he knows that he has all but lost his battle—he knows it is now or never)."

F APPLICATION:

- Satan presently is allowed to sift believers as wheat at times (Luke 22:31); testing the validity and strength of our faith. Satan seeks to destroy any believer he can (1 Pet. 5:8); emotionally, morally, spiritually or physically. If he can't destroy you utterly he at least hopes to cripple you for the remainder of your life. Satan also has access presently to the Father and accuses the brethren there, (Rev. 12:10). But, greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world (1 Jn. 4:4), Christ Himself intercedes on my behalf (Rom. 8:34), I am forgiven in Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13), and if God is for me know one can be against me, (Rom. 8:31). Satan is given much latitude, but through faith he is beaten at every turn. It is the truth that will set you free and the key of faith activates it. Nothing covered by the blood of Christ on the cross can be uncovered and threaten the safety of the believer!

3. The wrath of the dragon, (12:13-13:1a) - *"THE DRAGON THROWS A TEMPER TANTRUM ON THE EARTH!"*

INTERPRETATION:

¹³ **Now when the dragon** (the devil), **saw that he had been cast to the earth** (and could not prevent it), **he persecuted the woman** (the nation Israel, the Jews), **who gave birth to the male Child**, (the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is the real reason for

all of the devil's problems [Gen. 3:15]).

¹⁴ **But** (the devil was thwarted again, because), **the woman was given two wings of a great eagle** (i.e., Israel was divinely enabled to swiftly escape the persecution of the devil, [Mat. 24:15-20]), **that** (in order that), **she might fly** (flee, escape), **into the wilderness to her** (divinely appointed), **place** (of safety),⁴ **where she is nourished** (where Israel is sustained), **for a time and times and half a time** (3 ½ years), **from the presence** (and thus persecution), **of the serpent**, (the devil).

¹⁵ **So** (when the devil saw his prey slipping away from him), **the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood** (some form of disaster; possibly a large army [possibly the northern army, the scourge of the north {Eze. 38; Dan. 11:40-45}], **after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away** (devoured), **by the flood**.

¹⁶ **But the earth helped the woman** (Israel), **and the earth** (through some kind of geological disturbance), **opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood** (the disaster), **which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth**, (set in place to destroy Israel).

¹⁷ **And** (seeing his desperate hopes dashed yet again), **the dragon was** (further), **enraged with the woman** (Israel), **and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring** (either Jewish believers and/or born again believers in general), **who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ**.

F APPLICATION:

...The lesson for all of us is clear: God cares for those whom He wants to use to accomplish His purposes on earth. True, some people will give their lives (Rev. 12:11), but others will be spared (see Acts 12 for an example of this principle).⁵

(The characters thus far introduced at this period of time are Israel, the devil, the archangel, and Jesus Christ.)

Revelation 12:13-17 The Woman in the Wilderness

1. Her child –Christ the Messiah
2. Her help –wings of an eagle
3. Her flight –to the wilderness
4. Her safety –the earth
5. Her nourishment –or 3 ½ years in concealment
6. Her enemy –the devil
7. Her rescue –Jesus Christ ---John L. Benson

⁴ This hiding place was not clearly identified. Some suggest that it might be Petra, fortress capital of the Nabateans in Edom, south of the Dead Sea. This city has a narrow access which could easily be blocked but which opens up into a large canyon capable of caring for many thousands of people. Though Scripture is not specific, some believe the 144,000 of chapter 7 are to be preserved here. The Scriptures themselves speak of God's seal of protection on them. (Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Library System.)

⁵ Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System.