

The Dragon & His War – Revelation 12

I. Introduction & Overview

- a. Revelation 12 continues a “*parenthetical section*” of the book of Revelation. In this section, God reveals to John some of the details related to what happens during the Great Tribulation as He is pouring out His judgments. God shared this information with John and the Church so that we could operate in wisdom and discernment through the Great Tribulation. His bride at the end of the age will not be a “*helpless victim*”, but rather an “*active participant*”. This “*parenthetical section*” explains “*why*” the church will face such severe persecution at the end of the age.
- b. It is important to have a right understanding of the judgments of Revelation if we are to understand the parenthetical sections with clarity. The Seal, Trumpet, & Bowl judgments in Revelation **are not directed at believers of Jesus**. They are directed toward the Antichrist and His evil empire. Despite the opposition that the church will face from Satan and the Antichrist, it’s imperative that we remember the fact that they will be defeated (and we get to take part in overcoming them).
- c. **Revelation 12 & 13** describe the Great War that takes place in both heaven and on earth during the Great Tribulation. This is the most “symbolic” section of Revelation because God uses creative imagery to help paint a detailed picture of the great end time war. In this session we’ll cover **Revelation 12**.
 - i. **Verses 1-5** reach back into history and set the stage for the end-time conflict by giving details related to Israel, her Messiah, and Satan’s ancient rage against them.
 - ii. **Verses 6-17** detail the war in heaven that moves to earth and takes place specifically during the Great Tribulation (Final 3 ½ years of this age).

II. The Woman & Israel

(Revelation 12:1-2 NASB) “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was pregnant and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.”

- a. **A great sign** – The Greek word for “great” used here is “*megas*” which is used often to mean “loud”. This great sign or warning is meant to “loudly stand out” among the vision. This first picture is extremely important.
- b. **A woman** – The woman is the nation of Israel. We know this because she gives birth to the “male child (Jesus)” who is going to rule the nations with a rod of iron” (**Isaiah 66:7-9; Galatians 4:26; Revelation 12:2, 5**). This does not represent Mary the mother of Jesus, we know this because the dragon (Satan) is cast to earth and will persecute the “woman” at the end of the age for 1260 days (**Revelation 12:6, 12, 13**).
- c. **Clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, on her head a crown of twelve stars** – This phrase pulls on covenant language that God gave to Joseph in a dream (**Genesis 37:9**), and further demonstrates that the woman represents Israel. The woman being clothed with the sun, speaks of the radiance of the Glory of God which she is surrounded in. The moon under her feet means she is “*ruling*” or has authority. Her crown is clearly a sign for royal authority and victory.

(Genesis 37:9 NASB) “Then he [Joseph] had yet another dream, and informed his brothers of it, and said, “Behold, I have had yet another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”

III. The Red Dragon, Satan

(Revelation 12:3-4 NASB) “Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven crowns. 4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and hurled them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her Child.”

- a. **Another sign** – This sign is simply referred to as “another sign”. It does not carry the importance or significance that the “great sign” in **vv. 1** carries.
- b. **A great red dragon** – This chapter later goes on to describe the dragon to be Satan (**Revelation 12:9**). The imagery of a dragon is used to display his evil ferocity. The Old Testament speaks of other dragon-like creatures as fearful sea monsters (**Psalm 74:14; 89:10; Isaiah 27:1; 51:9; Job 40:15**). The “redness” of the dragon is a reference to bloodshed.
 - i. **Having seven heads** – **Revelation 17:7-11** helps us interpret the meaning of the seven heads. In **Revelation 17:3** we see the Beast (*Antichrist Empire*) who, like the dragon, also has seven heads and ten horns. Comparing **Revelation 12** and **17:7-11** leads us understand with clarity that the 7 heads represent 7 nations that functioned in the “*antichrist spirit*” by conquering and persecuting Israel (specifically Jerusalem). The seven Nations are: *Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and Turkish/Ottoman Empire (Islamic Caliphate)*.

(Revelation 17:7-11 NASB) “And the angel said to me, “Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who live on the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was, and is not, and will come. 9 Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sits, 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. 11 The beast which was, and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.”

- ii. **And ten horns** – **Revelation 17:12-13** defines the ten horns as 10 nations that will align with the Antichrist and give him their power and authority.

(Revelation 17:12-13 NASB) “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.”

- iii. **And on his heads were seven crowns** – The crowns on each of the 7 heads, speaks of the authority and rulership of the seven nations.
- c. **His tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and hurled them to the earth** – These are not “literal stars” but again, a reference to angelic beings. This verse reaches back to when Satan convinced 1/3 of the Angelic beings to join his rebellious rage against God.
- d. **The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her Child** – This gives insight into the nature of Satan’s plan throughout history. He has always intended to “devour” Jesus (Not let him carry out His redemptive plan). This is why he used the “seven heads” to persecute the woman (Israel) throughout history.
- e. **These verses remind us that the story we’ve been grafted in to is an Israel-centric story.** Satan hates God and His plans, and God’s chosen plan was to send His Son to earth through the nation of Israel, thus Satan hates the nation of Israel.

IV. The Male Child

(Revelation 12:5-6 NASB) “And she gave birth to a Son, a male, who is going to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her Child was caught up to God and to His throne. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for 1,260 days.”

- a. ***A Son, a male, who is going to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her Child was caught up to God and to His throne*** – This phrase gives us clarity, that the male child is Jesus. It pulls on *Psalm 2* language to speak of His Millennial reign (*Revelation 20:6*). The Child being caught up to God (*The Father*) and to His throne speaks of His ascension.

(Psalm 2:7-9 NASB) “I will announce the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have fathered You. 8 Ask it of Me, and I will certainly give the nations as Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.”

- b. *Verse 6* introduces a shift in the primary focus of this vision. While the verses before this gave a general scan of a large portion of history, *verse 6* “zero’s in” on the final 3 ½ years of this age, The Great Tribulation. Everything in this chapter that is written after *verse 6* is meant to give details about the war in heaven and on earth during the 1260 days.
- c. During the Great Tribulation, while Israel becomes the main object of the rage of Satan and the Antichrist, God will provide a way for her to “flee to the wilderness” like the Exodus, where he will provide and nourish her.

(Revelation 12:6 NASB) “Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for 1,260 days.”

V. The War in Heaven & On Earth

- a. Satan currently has access to the heavens. At the end of the age, he will wage war against Michael and his angels. The war isn’t between God and Satan (Satan wouldn’t last long at all), It’s between the Archangel Michael and Satan and His demonic principalities.

(Revelation 12:7 NASB) “And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war”

- b. We already know, that when the dragon wages this war, he will not prevail (*Revelation 12:8*). When he loses the battle in heaven, he will no longer be able to access the heavens and him and his “angles” will be thrown down to earth for a short time [*The remainder of this age, 1260 days, 3 ½ years, The Great Tribulation*] (*Revelation 12:9, 12*).

(Revelation 12:8-9 NASB) “And they did not prevail, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

- c. When this happens, there will be a great celebration in Heaven because it’s like the runway has been cleared for the Kingdom to land on earth. The implications for the church in this hour will be unlike anything we’ve ever seen before. The Church will experience an “open heavens” where the salvation, power, activity of the kingdom, and the authority of Christ are dynamically increased on the earth through the praying church. What happens when the accuser no longer has access to the courts of God to accuse the brethren?

(Revelation 12:10 NASB) “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before our God day and night.”

- d. When Satan loses the battle in heaven and is thrown down to earth, in great wrath and rage shifts his focus to the persecution of “*the woman who gave birth to the male Child [Israel]*”.

(Revelation 12:12-13,15 NASB) “For this reason, rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you with great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.” 13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child...15 And the serpent hurled water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.”

- e. God will sovereignly direct, protect, and provide for the nation of Israel during this time just like during the Exodus (***Revelation 12:6,14***). While Satan rages, God will supernaturally nourish Israel while also instructing the [*literal*] earth to defend his people (***Revelation 12:16***).

(Revelation 12:6,14,16 NASB) “Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for 1,260 days... 14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time, times, and half a time, away from the presence of the serpent... 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon had hurled out of his mouth.”

- f. When Satan is unsuccessful in wiping out the Woman (*nation of Israel*), he gets even more enraged and directs his focus on “the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus, the gentile believers (*you and I*). We need to approach this reality with incredible sobriety, Satan will make war with you and I at the end of this age.

(Revelation 12:17 NASB) “So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

- g. ***Revelation 12*** tells us the good news; we will be victorious over the dragon. God not only tells us that will overcome Satan, but tells us **how** we will win. The way in which we overcome Satan is 3-fold: 1) Through the blood of the Lamb 2) The word of our testimony [in Christ] 3) By not loving our lives when faced with death. Through his death, our redemption, and through our death, we will overcome Satan’s rage.

(Revelation 12:11 NASB) “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”

Questions For Discussion

1. What was one thing that was highlighted to you or stuck out in tonight’s teaching?
2. Did this teaching bring clarity to a thought or question you had related to the end times?
3. How does this teaching mobilize you to pray? (***1 Peter 4:7 NASB***) “***The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer***”