

Revelation 12

What appeared next (vv. 1-2)? A great and wondrous sign. **Which was what?** A woman. **How is the woman described?** *A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.*

Note: A sign (vv. 2, 4) is something that points to something beyond itself. It is not the intended focus or end point. It points to a destination, an event, an outcome, an object, etc. When you see a sign, you have not arrived yet.

If the woman was a sign, what was the sign pointing to? What was it a reference to? The faithful nation of Israel. The sun, moon and stars depict her glory and dominion in the coming kingdom. The crown of twelve stars points to the believing Messianic community within the twelve tribes.

What was the state of the woman; what was she about to do (v. 2)? She was pregnant, in labor and crying out in pain as she was about to give birth. The pain described refers to the travail of Israel at the time of Jesus' birth (under Roman occupation and oppression).

What sign appeared next (v. 3)? An enormous red dragon. **How was he described?** With seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His "red" color suggests bloodshed while seven heads and ten horns may represent the seven nations and ten rulers of 17:12.

Who were the stars that were swept out of the sky and flung to the earth (v. 4)? One-third of the heavenly angels who revolted with Satan at his fall (Revelation 12:7-9; Isaiah 14:12-17) and joined him in his fight and hatred against Israel and the purposes of God. This army of angelic beings makes up the world of demonic spirits.

What did the dragon do to the woman (v. 4)? He stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth. **What was his intent?** To devour her Child (the Messiah) the moment he was born. Satan knows very well the prophecies about God's plan that Israel's redemption would come through the promised Messiah. Throughout history he has been trying to thwart this plan of redemption. The attempt to devour her Child was initially fulfilled by Herod's attempts to kill Jesus as a child (Matthew 2:16-18).

Who was the Child (v. 5)? This was obviously Jesus. This means that the *woman* of Revelation 12:1 cannot be the church, because Jesus "gives birth" to the church, not the other way around. **How was He described (v. 5)?** A son who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter (Psalms 2:6-9). This is a reference to Christ's rule over the nations of the world, in the establishment of His millennial kingdom, associated with His second coming (19:15).

What happened to prevent the dragon from destroying the child (v. 5)? He was snatched up to God and to his throne. **What does this represent?** His ascension into heaven. Since Satan failed to destroy Jesus at His birth, during His life, and in His death, Jesus Christ ascended victoriously into heaven following his completed victory over Satan. Satan cannot persecute Him there.¹

Where did the woman go (v. 6)? The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God. **For how long?** 1260 days. Even though Satan has had it in for the Jews, God has preserved His people in both the past and present and will continue to do so in the future.²

What great event followed (v. 7)? War broke out in heaven. At the mid-point of the Great Tribulation, God will turn the tide against Satan – first in heaven, then on earth. A battle will take place that will deny Satan access to heaven. The earthly battle between the woman and the dragon is now interrupted by a glimpse of the parallel battle going on in heaven (vv. 7-12).

Who were the heavenly opponents? Michael the archangel, the leader of God's angelic army, and his angels were pitted against the dragon and his angels -- one third of the angels in heaven who had joined in Satan's rebellion (v. 4).

What was the outcome (v. 8-9)? The dragon and his angels proved to be weaker; they lost both the battle and their place in heaven. The great dragon was thrown out of heaven, was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Today Satan still has access to heaven where he functions as the accuser of believers. However in this future time, toward the end of the Tribulation, when Satan and his demons lose this heavenly battle, they will no longer be permitted access to heaven to bring forth those accusations.³

Note: The angels of v. 9 are also the same as the third of the stars of heaven described in v. 4. Since Satan only took with him a third of the stars of heaven, it means that two-thirds of the angels remained faithful to God. It's comforting to know that faithful angels outnumber fallen angels two to one.

The dragon (vv. 3, 4, 7) is finally identified. **Who is he (v. 9)?** That ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan. "Dragon" (Gr. drakon) occurs 12 times in the New Testament, and only in the Book of Revelation. In every instance it refers to Satan.⁴ **How is the dragon described?** The one who leads the whole world astray.

What did a loud voice then state (v. 10)? The voice announced the heavenly victory of Michael and his angels.

Who are "they" (v. 11)? The Tribulation martyrs. **How have they overcome Satan (v. 11)?**

- By the blood of the Lamb. Jesus had paid the penalty our sins deserved. We have been set free from the bondage to sin. Our sins have been washed away to be remembered no more (Jeremiah 31:34).
- By the word of their testimony i.e. they knew what they had seen and heard and experienced from God; they could not be deceived by Satan's lies telling them it wasn't true (as the testimony of the man born blind in John 9:25).
- They did not cling to their own earthly lives. There was no effective threat Satan could bring against them.

What danger did the believing inhabitants of earth face (v. 12b)? Satan is at this point confined to the earth. He knows he is beaten and has a short time left. He is like a wounded, cornered animal that fights ferociously with renewed antagonism and wrath. He only has 1,260 days before Jesus Christ returns to the earth and binds him (20:1-2).

Who did the dragon then try to persecute (v. 13)? Once he is cast out of heaven, Satan, with renewed vigor, will aggressively pursue the woman who had given birth to the male child, i.e. Israel in general or Messianic Jews in particular. He will do everything in his power to destroy her.

Why did Satan pick on the Jewish people? From the time of Abraham, Israel has held a critical role in God's plan of redemption. Satan's main enemy, Jesus the Messiah, came from them and is one of them. Satan knows if he can destroy the Jewish people, he can thwart God's plan, or so he thinks.

What happened to her next (v. 14)? The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach (v. 6). The Israelites will receive divine assistance in fleeing from the dragon which implies the superior protection of God.⁵

The various references in Revelation to "a time and times and half a time," "three and a half years," "42 months" and "1,260 days," all refer to the same period: the Great Tribulation.⁶

How did the dragon next try to defeat her (v. 15)? He tried to drown her. **What happened instead (v. 16)?** The earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. This passage further describes God's ultimate protection of Israel.

Toward whom did the dragon then turn his anger (v. 17)? The rest of her offspring. **Who are they?** Jews and Gentiles who come to faith in Jesus during the Great Tribulation, including the 144,000.

The Christian life is not a playground; it's a battleground! If you live for Jesus Christ in this life, there will be suffering but the rewards will be eternal (2 Timothy 3:12).⁷

¹ Keith Krell, Live Like You're Leaving: Revelation, Copyright ©2003, Bible.org

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Revelation, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 134

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. p. 139

⁷ Keith Krell, Live Like You're Leaving: Revelation, Copyright ©2003, Bible.org