



BANNER of *Love* MINISTRIES

Revelation 12 Explained

"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; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw 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."

Revelation 12:1-4

The great sign that John saw was the woman Israel about to give birth. We know that the woman is symbolic of Israel because the symbolism is old (see Gen 11:9-10). The woman is in pain and about to give birth. In other words, John sees a vision of Israel entering into the time of the Tribulation about to give birth. The context of the prophecy is the Day of the Lord, the Tribulation, or the time of Birth Pains. All of these names refer to the same time Period. The prophecy, in a typical Jewish way, depicts the event as happening in heaven while in fact it is happening on the earth. This is clearly illustrated in the second part of the vision, which we will deal with next. The events that happen in heaven directly affect the events on the earth and the events that transpire on Earth directly affect events in heaven. To a first century Jew, there were two levels of reality, the spiritual and the natural, and they were both closely connected (1 Cor 15:40-50).

What is in Heaven Represents What is on Earth!

Now notice the position of the dragon. He is directly before the woman (Israel) which of course is where Satan positions himself in the beginning of the Tribulation with the Abomination of Desolation. Also, notice that he is called "the dragon," "the serpent of old which indicates that he is no longer masked in any way. That's because he has just been cast out of the heavenlies by Michael and his angels and knows that his time is short. When the "man of lawlessness" is revealed, there are no more disguises. Notice that the dragon has seven heads and ten horns. The dragon, who is working through and empowering Antichrist, represents the ten kingdoms of the Revived Roman Empire, and the Seven Heads which represent the city of Rome and the seven great empires that persecuted Israel (see Chapter 3). Then the woman (Israel) gives birth to a son, "a male child who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron." Then she fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God where she would be nourished for three and a half years.

"And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days." Rev 12:5-6

The Child is Not Jesus

Most Bible teachers and scholars consider the "male child" to be Jesus, and the above verse a reference to His birth and ascension into heaven. However, this position is untenable for the following reasons.

- The Bride of Christ or the "overcomers" were also given the promise of ruling the nations with a rod of iron (Rev 2:26-27, 3:21).
- The son is immediately snatched to heaven. The Greek word that is translated "caught up" is "harpazo" which means "to snatch away." It's the same word used in 1 Thess 4:17 from which we get the word "Rapture." It is a violent and sudden snatching away. Jesus

was not, in any way, snatched into heaven. He left intentionally, and His disciples saw Him depart. The word used in Acts 1:9 is not "harpazo" but "epairo" which means to raise up. It was neither violent nor sudden. He was not snatched away from the clutches of satan as the male child is in this . passage.

- After Messiah ascended to heaven, there was no subsequent fleeing of Israel to the desert to a place prepared by God. In fact, Israel received no such help at all after Jesus' ascension, but forty years later the Jews were massacred and the rest scattered to the nations. Those who claim that all these events are past have a serious problem with history and missing data. There is no record in the first century of Israel being protected in the wilderness for three and a half years. On the other hand, those who claim that the first part of the prophecy is past and the rest future, have a serious contextual problem. If they believe future, have a serious contextual problem. If they believe that the rest of the chapter is future, then how can they separate this one event, the birth of the male child, from its clearly defined context which can only take place at the end of the age? For example, in verse 5 the woman is said to give birth and her child raptured. But in verse 4 the devil is cast out of the heavens and is poised to devour the child before he is born. The second part of the vision is merely a repeat of the first part (it is all one vision) with more detail. Thus satan would have to have been cast out of the heavens around 32AD and the Abomination of Desolation set up, followed by Armageddon and the Millennium. Preterists, of course, believe this.
- If we accept that the vision applies to the future Day of the Lord, then I believe the simplest interpretation is that the male child is the Bride of Christ who is destined to sit next to her Bridegroom and rule all the nations.

The Bride of Christ is the overcoming church that is to sit down with Jesus on His throne according to the following verses.

"He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star." Rev 2:26-28

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." Rey 3:21

Now let's look at the rest of the vision.

"And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 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." Rev 12:7-9

At the midpoint of the Last Shemitah Cycle, the devil is cast out of the heavenly realm. His being thrown to Earth is the factor that begins the labor pains of Israel. It is the event which transforms the Antichrist and causes him to break the covenant with the Jews and set out to destroy them. Notice that he will first set his attention on the Bride of Christ, but she will be snatched away just in the nick of time.

"And 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 brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. 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 to death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." Rev 12:10-12

The casting out of satan from the heavenlies is a great victory for the saints of God and causes great rejoicing in heaven. This is undoubtedly the event that Jesus foresaw in Luke 10:18-21 that caused Him to rejoice greatly. It also underscores the role that the Bride plays in his downfall. When it says "they overcame him, is a reference to the godly living of the Bride and her spiritual warfare which have contributed greatly to satan's demise. These overcomers are representative of all their brethren who have gone before them who willingly laid down their lives for Christ (Rev 6:9-11). Also, when it says they "did not love their life even to death" it does not mean they were martyred. If that were the case then they would not be snatched away from the clutches of satan. What it means is that they were totally given to Christ and were not afraid to die for Him if need be.

After satan is cast out, the long-awaited salvation (deliverance) of the church comes, and with it the Kingdom of God or the Day of the Lord when Messiah cleanses the earth of His enemies and begins His reign. Despite the great rejoicing in heaven, there is a sad note. Michael the archangel, who has restrained satan's attempts to destroy Israel for centuries, steps aside and hurls the devil and his cohorts to the earth, where he vents all of his fury on a rebellious planet, and begins his last attempt to annihilate the Jews.

"And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth." Rev 12:13-16

When the devil loses his footing in the heavens, he realizes that his time is up. The reality finally gets to him. He has only one card left to play and that is the destruction of the Jewish people. In this way he hopes to thwart the purpose of God and keep Him from fulfilling His promises. But as always, he miscalculates. God has a special deliverance in store for this remnant who turn to him for help and flee the wrath of the serpent. There is a place prepared for them in the desert, probably east of the Dead Sea in Jordan. The Antichrist pours water out of his mouth like a flood after them. This is figurative language referring to armies (Dan 9:26, Nah 1:8). When the armies come, there is a great earthquake and the ground literally swallows them (see Zech 14:4).

"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus." Rev 12:7-17

Failing in his attempts to destroy the Jewish remnant that are sealed and protected by God, the devil sets his attention on the rest of the Jews and all the Christians who are left. By this time I believe that there will be multitudes turning to Messiah from among the Jews and Gentiles. As dark a day as the Tribulation is, it has a glorious end. Yet, they will suffer greatly. Notice that the male child (Bride) that is caught up to God is spoken of as overcoming the Antichrist. On the other hand, those who remain, though they will rise again and reign with Messiah will be overcome and killed (Rev 13:7).