

# Revelation 12

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Let's read the chapter and then we'll go back through it verse by verse.

## Chapter 12: The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

1. Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven *crowns* on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there 1,260 days.

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 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. 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. 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."

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. 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. 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. 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.

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John is being shown a series of visions, one after the other; between the visions he is being given time to write down what he has seen. He didn't see one long panorama and then later sit down to write it all out from memory. Remember when the 7 thunders sounded back in chapter 10 ... John said he was about to write what he heard but was suddenly told not to... that was not for us to know... not yet.

At the beginning of Revelation, Jesus told him to write down what he was shown. He wasn't told to editorialize or explain, except when he was given an explanation from Jesus Christ or an angel.

God knew His own intent... like with Jesus' parables, this Revelation would be hidden from the spiritually dead; hidden from the World and from false teachers; it would only be revealed and explained to those who, by wisdom from God's Holy Spirit living within, would have '*ears to hear*' and '*eyes to see*' and *hearts to understand*. That is why God used so many symbols in this book... signs... things that clearly represent something else... things hidden from the World, things hidden from Satan, but revealed to God's children.

**The secret things belong to the LORD** our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever... Deut 29:29 Things of God, things of His Holy Spirit, are only discerned by His Holy Spirit.

'Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God... the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned... but we have the mind of Christ.' 1 Cor 2

God is revealing His Word to us; He is blessing us as He promised to, for all who read and hear The Revelation. It is composed of several successive visions which all flow seamlessly into a single narrative, one of the most important and consequential books of the Bible.

The first few verses of Chapter 12 are what false teachers were so worked up about a few months ago... confusing people with the expectation of some great cosmic event back on Sept. 23. If you remember... since the constellation Virgo was under the constellation Leo and the moon a few planets were shining in the area, it had to be the magical fulfillment of what we are about to read. That September alignment of planets and stars had nothing to do with this. Forget whatever you might have heard then. It meant nothing more than a regular attempt by Satan to confuse God's children regarding His Word. His Word is never confusing when we ask the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:5

And now, with God's wisdom we'll begin to understand it...

**Verse 1:** Now a **great sign** appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

This is a '**great sign**' a symbol of something else. John sees a woman, but we are meant to see something else.

If we drive north on the expressway, we'll see a sign that points to the Sellwood Bridge. That sign is **not** the Sellwood Bridge... it reveals **the way to** the Sellwood Bridge. We locals understand when we see that sign... we can see in our minds the Sellwood Bridge and we know if we follow that and other signs, we will eventually see the Sellwood Bridge and though it doesn't say so, we know and understand that sign has a deeper meaning; it is the best way to cross the Willamette River, the best way to Lake Oswego, to Beaverton and to Seaside. But to foreigners, those without wisdom and understanding from an English teacher, that sign just looks like a green sheet of metal with white marks on it. They could imagine it means anything they want it to mean. But to the writers of that sign... it has one basic meaning ... 'This way to the Sellwood Bridge!'

That's what we have here and throughout Revelation... signs that point to another meaning... a meaning revealed to those with God's wisdom, but hidden from those without. The only way we can understand what God is telling us in Revelation or in any other part of the Bible is to have a familiarity and understanding of all parts of the Bible. That's why Paul told Timothy, 'ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' 2 Tim 3

This great sign looks very much like one of Joseph's dreams back in Gen 37. Joseph said to his brothers, 'Look, I have dreamed *another* dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.'

In this dream, God is revealing to Joseph he has been chosen to an exalted position above all his brothers and even his parents... This is before there is even any nation of Israel... they are but one family... Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel and his 12 sons by 4 mothers. Joseph represents the future Messiah, the hope and salvation of his family, in Egypt and of all Israel... actually the hope of all the World. He represents the glory of Israel as God's chosen nation... actually God's chosen wife.

Israel is often represented as a woman, as the wife of God, the unfaithful wife of God, even though God is always faithful to His promises and will fulfill all His promises to Israel. Eventually, Israel will be glorified above all the nations of the Earth, glorified as the special, beloved nation and people of God. At the end of Revelation we will see Israel, the wife of God glorified and exalted, purified and righteous, just as the Bride of Christ, the Church, was made righteous at the Cross and eventually will be glorified in ruling and reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ forever. That is the major plot of Revelation... God's faithful fulfillment of all He has promised to Israel.

This woman, this great sign, representing Israel, is exalted here above all other nations in all her future glory. As she is pregnant and in pain, she represents her bringing forth the Messiah and also all the pain and persecution Israel has endured for the past 3000 years. She is suffering Israel... in labor... trying to give birth... when will she finally see God's answers... when will the persecution stop... when will the Messiah come and rescue her... when will He bring His promised Kingdom... she is in labor ready to give birth to all of what has been promised.

**Verse 3:** And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. This dragon represents Satan. We are told so in verse 9 and also again in chapter 20.

Remember in the garden... Satan came to Eve in the form of a *serpent*... it was beautiful and beguiling... it could speak, which didn't seem to bother Eve at all... but it wasn't just a snake, like we see... remember God's curse to the serpent... God said, ' "Because you have done this you *are* cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; **on your belly you shall go**, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.

Before Adam's sin, before God's curse on all creation, the serpent could speak... it had legs and perhaps even wings... it didn't crawl on its belly... it sounds very much like what we think of as a **dragon**. Perhaps dragons aren't as mythical as we've been led to believe.

Here and elsewhere, Satan is seen as a **dragon**. With its 7 heads, 7 crowns and 10 horns, the dragon also represents Satan's kingdom over the world system. The 7 heads represent the 7 successive world kingdoms, 5 of which we see in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an *Image of a Man*... *head of Gold, arms of silver etc...* in Daniel 3... and the final 2 kingdoms of these last days... They are... Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, Rome divided, Rome dispersed and then, in the last days... Rome revived and the final world kingdom of Antichrist which will finally be destroyed completely and replaced by the Lord Jesus Christ and His Eternal Kingdom. The 10 horns represent the 10 kings who will make up the revived Roman Empire... who will then make up the kingdom of Antichrist... 7 will willingly give their allegiance and the other 3 will be forced. If you remember, earlier we saw that the United Nations has already divided the World up into 10 provinces.

The 7 crowns on the dragon's 7 heads indicate that it is Satan who has controlled the World System through all these successive kingdoms as the god of this World, the prince over the kingdom of darkness. God is always in complete control, but He has allowed Satan a measure of authority throughout the history of man. God has allowed Satan's kingdom in order to further accomplish His plan and purpose throughout all time and eternity... that is, **the Glory of God**.

The dragon's tail bringing down a third of the stars represents the third of the angels of Heaven who followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God, now comprising the powerful kingdom of darkness that seeks to destroy the Body of Christ and the Nation of Israel. Angels are called stars in Job, here and earlier in Revelation... remember Jesus in the first chapter having 7 stars in His right hand... we were told they were the 7 angels of the 7 churches.

**Verse 4:** And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

From the very beginning of human history, in the garden, when God pronounced the curse for Adam's sin, He promised that eventually, from a woman, from the seed of a woman... a deliverer, a savior would come who would crush the head of Satan, the deceiver, the adversary... and since that time, Satan has sought to thwart God's plan and promises.

He tried to have all the Israelite baby boys born in Egypt killed... Moses was saved.

He tried to kill all the Jews in the Captivity through Haman. They were saved through Ester.

He tried to kill all the baby boys in Israel when Jesus was born. Jesus was kept safe.

God has always been in complete control and He always will be.

**Verse 5:** She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

This Child represents the Lord Jesus Christ who will rule all the World with a rod of iron during His Millennial Kingdom... we'll see that later in our study.

The Child was caught up to God and His throne... this is Jesus' ascension after His resurrection. The word used here for His being **caught up**... is the same Greek word Paul uses for the Rapture when we will be caught up... Harpazo... it means to be caught up by force, violently. The NIV says the Child was **snatched up to God**.

**Verse 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.

This is the time of which Jesus warned the Jews to flee Jerusalem the moment they saw the Abomination of Desolation, the Antichrist defiling the Temple and declaring himself God. From that time he would seek to destroy all Israel and all gentile believers.

Jesus said, "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place," whoever reads, let him understand, <sup>16</sup> "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." Matt 24

This is that very time...the woman, Israel, fleeing into the wilderness... probably to Petra where God will protect many Jews, His elect, for the final 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation, until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Verse 7** 'And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup> but they did not prevail, **nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.** <sup>9</sup> 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.'

**This is the midpoint of the Tribulation.** Satan is **finally** cast out of Heaven and that third of the angels will now, with Satan, be cast completely out of Heaven, no longer having any Heavenly access.

Remember, Satan has had access to Heaven... even the third Heaven. In Job we are told that the 'sons of God' presented themselves before God and Satan was with them to accuse Job. We are also told that even now, he has had access to Heaven and to God as he constantly accuses us before God while the Lord Jesus Christ defends us. Satan is directing his kingdom of darkness from some lofty place and since he is neither omniscient nor omnipresent... he isn't all-knowing and he can be in only one place at a time... he must have other fallen angels flying back and forth for directions, commands and information.

Now is the time, here at the midpoint of the Tribulation, God has finally decided to remove Satan from any part of Heaven. Michael, **the** Archangel commands God's legions of angels in battle against Satan and the third of the angels who rebelled with him so long before. They are cast out of Heaven and down to the Earth; their wings are clipped and they are angry. Now it hits home... it's really happening... judgment is coming.

**Verse 10:** 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.

Look at that... **'Now** salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come... salvation, strength, the Kingdom and power have NOW come... not before... NOW... this is what has

been prayed for, for 2000 years... 'Thy Kingdom come... Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. NOW it is **finally** happening. Why?... because the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down... because Satan has finally been cast out of Heaven. God is no longer listening to his drivel and the Lord Jesus Christ is no longer constantly defending the believers.

There has never been such persecution and evil as is now about to begin because Satan and all the fallen angels have been cast to Earth... and there has never been such spiritual power and strengthening from God in defense and protection.

**Verse 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.** <sup>12</sup> 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.'

Believers are being empowered to hold fast to their faith and confession...they know their citizenship is in Heaven, they know their destiny... they are being strengthened and upheld by the Holy Spirit to the extent they are willing and able to face certain death without wavering. Therefore all Heaven rejoices to see it but... woe to those whose citizenship is of the Earth... who reject God, who follow Satan and the Antichrist... they thought Antichrist was their savior, they thought Lucifer was their friend... now he has been cast to Earth and they will all see and experience who he really is... there's a reason this time will be called the **Great Tribulation**.

**Verse 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*. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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.

Satan, personally indwelling the Antichrist, comes after Jews and gentile believers with fury and vengeance. Now that he sees his kingdom slipping away and God's judgment very near, he is ready to use all his power and ability to destroy the World and everyone in it. He somehow is able to attempt to destroy them with a localized flood but God supernaturally protects and guards this remnant of believing Israel, taking them to a hidden place in the wilderness where they wait out the 3 1/2 years of the Great Tribulation. God causes the Earth to open a hole, perhaps by an earthquake, and drain the water from Satan's supernatural flood. Whether their being given wings of an eagle means they are airlifted to God's secret place or whether it means, like in Isaiah, those who wait on the Lord will be strengthened and mount up with wings like eagles... we don't know... but we do know, God will protect them, they will get there, and Satan will be unable to get to them or harm them.

Having failed to destroy God's elect remnant of Israel, like a dog, unable to get to the raccoon in the tree, Satan leaves that place and sets about to rob, kill and destroy every remaining Jew and gentile believer throughout the World.