

THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, AND THE MALE CHILD

Chapter 12

The central theme in the Book of Revelation is the struggle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (11:15). Throughout history this struggle has been the ongoing reality for the Church on earth, **Jn. 16:33** In the world ye shall have tribulation. ... **Acts 14:22** we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. However, approaching the end of this present age, the Church will pass through the most intensive persecution, **Mt. 24:21** For then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. This aggression will be waged by a satanically inspired ruler known as the beast (11:7), or the Antichrist. He will strenuously attempt to frustrate the rule of God on earth by gaining universal power, demanding global worship, and inflicting suffering and death on all who remain faithful to Christ, i.e. the Church.

During this time of ‘great tribulation’, God will assert His sovereignty by pouring out judgments of His wrath upon those who worship the beast. In the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15-19) is the announcement of the establishment of the Kingdom of God, along with the destruction of them which destroy the earth (1:18).

The chapter begins with John as an observer of events which occur in the heavens, and he seems to be watching from earth, **12:1** And there appeared a great wonder *σημεῖον*, *sign* in heaven *in the sky*; a woman. ... Some commentators consider the woman represents the Messiah’s mother, Mary. Others suggest she is Israel, the people who ‘gave birth’ to the Lord Jesus. However, this heavenly woman is mother both of the Messiah (v.5, cf. **Is. 66:7** Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child), and also of the Church, **Rev. 12:17** the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ **Gal. 4:26**. She is the mother of the true Israel in the Old Testament and of the people of the Messiah in the New Testament, i.e. the complete redeemed Church.

She is a glorious figure, **12:1** a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. She is beautifully dazzling in the brilliant sunlight. She captures John’s attention. She is adorned in the glory of the heavens. She is not the Virgin Mary in elevated form, as the Roman Catholic Church describes her a ‘co-redemptrix’ with Christ, ‘co-operating’ with the Redeemer, with God’s plan, and her Son’s role in it (cf. Sirach 24), “For the salvation of mankind, she gave up her rights as the mother of her son and, in a sense, offered Christ’s sacrifice to God the Father as far as she was permitted to do. Therefore, one can say, she redeemed with Christ the human race (Pope Benedict XV, Apostolic Letter, 1918).

Instead, she is the Bride of Christ, consisting of the Elect in the Old and New Testaments and until Christ returns. She is *precious* (Is. 62:5 as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee). She is *perfect* (Eph. 5:25 ... a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that ... holy and without blemish). She is *presented* (Rev. 19:7 the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ ... arrayed in fine linen, clean and white ... the righteousness of saints.) ... She is beautiful, and she is beaming ... clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. ... She is also expecting a child.

There appeared another sign in the sky, ³ And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. As much of a 'wonder' as this second menacing sign was, it was not in the same category as the 'great wonder' in v. 1. It obviously attracted John's attention, but not anything near to the extent of the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

This great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads is that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan (v.9). Seven-headed, ten horned, seven-crowned, - he is not natural. He is not human. He is wickedly evil. He tries to imitate Christ by wearing the seven crowns. However, on Christ's head were *many* crowns (Rev. 19:12). ... The imagery of the ten horns relates to Dan. 7, ⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns ... ²⁴ And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. ²⁵ And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

This great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads is such a colossal creature he sweeps a third of the stars, as it were, out of the sky with his powerful tail, and did cast them to the earth (v.4). Then he goes to the woman and stands before her, glaring ominously into her face. ... He is confronting the Church, God's people, the woman which was ready to be delivered. He tried to block her Child, - Christ the Messiah, - in His first coming to earth, and he puts every impediment in the way to bar Christ's second coming for he knows his days are numbered, should that take place.

He is standing before the heavily pregnant woman, but he is incapable and impotent to devour her child as soon as it was born (v.4) for he is helpless before God! Failing to stop the Messiah entering the world as the incarnate Son of God, Satan's ultimate purpose then is to frustrate the work of Christ, the man child, who was to rule all

nations with a rod of iron. He failed though for her child [*Jesus Christ*] was caught up [*ascended*] unto God [*into Heaven*], and to his throne (v.5; Rev. 5). This is God's anointed, Christ, the Messiah, the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, Ps. 2:9; Rev. 19:15 ... the King of kings, the Lord of lords, ... and it is impossible, inconceivable, and beyond the scope of Satan or any other to destroy Him or disrupt the Divine plan!

Since Satan the dragon cannot annihilate or defeat the Messiah, he turns his attention to crush the mother, the heavenly woman who 'gave birth' to the Messiah. However, once again his plans are in vain because God protects her (the Church) by bringing her ⁶ into the wilderness [*to where she flees*], where she hath a *place prepared of God*, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days [*13½ years, 42 months*]. God will preserve the heavenly woman, the Church, on earth.

John continues, ⁷ And there was war in heaven: Michael [*archangel, 'angel of the highest rank', Dan. 10:13; Jude, v.9*] and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, ⁸ And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. ⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ... Did the conflict take place in Heaven? No, because sin cannot enter Heaven, Rev. 21:27 there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination ... not in the future, nor the present, nor the past. Paul explains where it took place, Eph. 6:12 we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness *in high places*... not in Heaven, but *in the heavenlies*, which includes the demonic realm. It is the plan of Satan's kingdom to engage in continuous spiritual warfare against God's people and to frustrate God's will as they battle *in high places*... in the heavenlies.

In the history of God's plan for our redemption, the greatest warfare between the forces of God and the forces of Satan took place at the cross ... and that is where Satan was defeated! He was terminally and mortally wounded at the cross, as prophesied at the beginning of time, when God told him Gen. 3:15 I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. ... He is not bound in a pit or prison for he is presently roaming about like a lion seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). ... But at the cross, the battle was so fierce he bruised 'the heel' of the Saviour, but also at the cross the Saviour 'bruised Satan's head', inflicting upon him such a devastating blow from which he has never recovered, Jesus described it, Lk. 10:18 I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. ... And that is what John also saw ... Satan and his demons falling out of the sky in relation to Christ's victory at the cross through the shedding of His own precious blood. And that is the assurance for every believer

that Satan, - no matter how active he appears and claims to be, - he is a defeated foe awaiting his eternal damnation in the eternal fires of Hell!

Immediately John ¹⁰ heard a loud voice saying [*proclaiming*] in heaven *in the presence of God and His redeemed people, including the martyrs from 6:9-11*, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of *our brethren [the martyrs]* is cast down [*... at the cross!*], which accused them before our God day and night. ¹¹ And they overcame him by *the blood of the Lamb*, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death [*faithfulness in and too the Gospel of God's saving grace!*]. ... The shed blood of Christ is the real means of victory over Satan, and Satan's accusations against God's people are frustrated for he is limited as to what he can do to them (cf. Job 1-2). Satan has been overthrown but he is not yet destroyed, ¹² Therefore rejoice, *ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them*. Woe to *the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea* for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because *he knoweth that he hath but a short time*. He knows his final doom is sealed, but he is still permitted, - in the will of God, - to exercise great power.

While the saints in Heaven are safe from his attacks, he increases his assaults towards the saints on earth, ¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. ... He pursues the woman, ¹⁴ And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time [*3½ years, cf. Dan. 7:25 ... 42 months, 1260 days*], from the face of the serpent. ... Every effort of Satan to destroy God's people through the great tribulation will fail because ^{Mt. 24:13} *he/she* that shall endure unto the end, *the same shall be saved*.

And when the serpent pursued the woman, ¹⁵ the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood [*to drown her*], however, the Creator intervened, ¹⁶ And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. ... Satan that he is powerless to do any more than God permits!

He knows his days are numbered. At the cross he has lost the battle against the 'Child' of the woman for Jesus is in Heaven with His Father. He has also lost the battle against the saints who died in Christ and who were taken to Glory. He is not prepared to quit though, as he unleashes his wrath in one final desperate attempt to make war *with the remnant of her [the woman's] seed*, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (v.17) ... This end-times conflict between God's Redeemed and the Antichrist will culminate with Christ's return to earth.