

"THE BOOK OF REVELATION"

Chapter Twelve

With this chapter the transition is made from Christ's judgment on Jerusalem (**chpt. 6-11**) to His judgment on Rome (**chapters 13-19**). To expedite the transition, we are told of Satan's effort to destroy the work of Christ and His church.

We read of his failed attempt to prevent **the male Child** from being born and assuming His rightful place of authority as ruler of the nations (**1-6**).

An effort to usurp that authority by waging war in heaven is thwarted, resulting in **the devil** and his angels being cast to earth. That prompts a loud voice in heaven to proclaim that salvation, strength, the kingdom of God and the power of His Christ has come. Because the accuser (i.e., the devil) has been cast down, those in heaven who overcame by the blood of Jesus and their testimony, and who did not love their lives to the death, could rejoice. But woe is proclaimed to those on the earth, because now the devil has come down to them and he knows his time is short (**7-12**).

At first the dragon's efforts are directed toward **the woman** who gave birth to the child. However, she is given wings to fly to her place in the wilderness where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time (1,260 days, cf. v.6). Even the earth helped the woman, so enraging the dragon that he went to make war with the rest of **her offspring**, identified as those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (**13-17**).

While the identities of the male child and the dragon are rather evident, who is the woman and the rest of her offspring? I suggest the woman represents the spirit of faithfulness in God's messianic community (perhaps best exemplified by Mary) who kept covenant with God. Called "the daughter of Zion" in prophecy (cf. **Mic 4:10; 5:2ff; Isa 66:7ff**), she produced not only Christ, but His first disciples as well, beginning with the faithful Jewish Christian community that escaped the fall of Jerusalem by fleeing into the wilderness (cf. **Re 12:13-16**). Satan therefore, changed his attention from Jewish Christians in Palestine to Christians in Roman lands, i.e., the woman's offspring (cf. **Re 12:17**).

Thus, the chapter reveals why a period of great tribulation was about to come upon Christians, especially **in Asia Minor** (cf. **Re 2:10**). Satan was frustrated by being thwarted at every turn. Cast down to the earth, he would make every attempt to destroy the disciples of Jesus. Forces he would use are introduced in chapter thirteen.

POINTS TO PONDER

- * The primary force behind the persecution coming upon the early Christians
- * Why the persecution of the early church was so intense

OUTLINE

I. THE WOMAN, THE CHILD, AND THE DRAGON (1-6)

A. THE WOMAN WITH CHILD (1-2)

1. A great sign appeared in heaven, in which woman is clothed:
 - a. With the sun
 - b. With the moon under her feet
 - c. A garland of twelve stars on her head
2. Being with child, she cried out in labor and pain to give birth

B. THE DRAGON READY TO DEVOUR THE CHILD (3-4)

1. Another great sign appeared in heaven: a great, fiery red dragon
 - a. With seven heads, ten horns, seven diadems on the heads
 - b. With a tail which threw a third of the stars of heaven to the earth
2. Standing before the woman, ready to devour the child as soon as it is born

C. THE OUTCOME OF THE CHILD AND THE WOMAN (5-6)

1. The male child is born
 - a. Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron
 - b. Who was caught up to God and His throne
2. The woman fled into the wilderness
 - a. Where she has a place prepared by God
 - b. Where she is fed for 1,260 days

II. SATAN THROWN OUT OF HEAVEN (7-12)

A. A WAR IN HEAVEN (7-9)

1. Between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels
2. The dragon and his angels did not prevail
 - a. No place was found for them in heaven any longer
 - b. The dragon and his angels were cast to the earth
 - c. The dragon identified
 - 1) That serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan
 - 2) Who deceives the whole world

B. A LOUD VOICE IN HEAVEN (10-12)

1. Proclaiming victory for Christ and His brethren
 - a. Salvation, strength, the kingdom of God, and the power of Christ have come
 - 1) For the accuser of the brethren has been cast down
 - 2) Who had accused them before God day and night
 - b. How the brethren overcame the accuser:
 - 1) By the blood of the Lamb
 - 2) By the word of their testimony
 - 3) They did not love their lives to the death
2. A call to rejoice, along with a warning
 - a. For those in heaven, rejoice!
 - b. For the inhabitants of the earth and sea, woe!
 - 1) For the devil has come down to them having great wrath
 - 2) Knowing that he has only a short time

III. THE FAILED ATTEMPT TO PERSECUTE THE WOMAN (13-17)

A. THE DRAGON'S ATTEMPT TO PERSECUTE THE WOMAN (13-16)

1. Cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to

- the male child
2. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle
 - a. That she might fly into the wilderness to her place
 - b. Where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time
 - c. Safe from the presence of the serpent
 3. The serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman
 - a. Hoping to cause her to be carried away
 - b. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing up the flood

B. THE DRAGON'S INTENT TO PERSECUTE HER OFFSPRING (17)

1. Enraged with the woman he cannot reach, the dragon goes to make war with the rest of her offspring
2. The rest of her offspring identified:
 - a. Those who keep the commandments of God
 - b. Those who have the testimony of Jesus Christ

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) **What are the main points of this chapter?**
 - The woman, the child, and the dragon (1-6)
 - Satan thrown out of heaven (7-12)
 - The failed attempt to persecute the woman (13-17)
- 2) **What great sign appeared in heaven? (1-2)**
 - A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars
 - Being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth
- 3) **What other sign then appeared in heaven (3-4)**
 - A great fiery red dragon, with seven heads, ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads
 - Whose tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth
 - Who stood before the woman, ready to devour her child as soon as it was born
- 4) **What child was born? What happened to the child? (5)**
 - A male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron
 - He was caught up to God and His throne
- 5) **What happened to the woman? (6)**
 - She fled to the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God
 - She was fed for 1,260 days
- 6) **What happened in heaven? Who did not prevail? (7-8)**
 - War broke out between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels
 - The dragon and his angels
- 7) **Who was this dragon? What was done with him and his angels? (9)**
 - The serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world
 - They were cast out of heaven
- 8) **What did a loud voice proclaim in heaven about Christ and the dragon?**

(10)

- Salvation, strength, the kingdom of God, and the power of His Christ has come
- The accuser of our brethren, who accused them before God day and night, has been cast down

9) How had the brethren overcome the dragon? (11)

- By the blood of the Lamb
- By the word of their testimony
- By not loving their lives to the death

10) What are those who dwell in heaven told? (12)

- To rejoice

11) Why was woe proclaimed to the inhabitants of the earth and sea? (12)

- For the devil with great wrath has come down to them
- For he knows he only has a short time

12) Cast down to the earth, who did the dragon persecute next? (13)

- The woman who gave birth to the male child

13) What was given the woman? Why? (14)

- Two wings of a great eagle
- To fly into the wilderness to her place, from the presence of the serpent

14) How long was she nourished? (14)

- A time, times, and a half of time

15) How did the serpent try to persecute the woman? Who helped her? (15-16)

- By spewing water out of his mouth, to carry her away by the flood
- The earth, by opening its mouth and swallowing up the flood

16) Enraged by his inability to persecute the woman, who did the dragon go to make war with next? (17)

- The rest of her offspring
- Those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ