

heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child. 5 And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

#### Initial Questions 12:1-6

1. What was the great sign (*semeion* - one of the N.T. words for miracle) - vs. 1?
2. What does the symbolism of vs. 2 imply?
3. Does the sign of vs. 3 imply supernatural power for the great red dragon?
4. Who could possibly fulfill the imagery of vs. 5?
5. Discuss the fact that the two witnesses of chp. 11 prophesied 42 months (or 1260 days) and the fact that the woman was hid away for 1260 days - vs. 6?

#### The Woman with Child, and the Great Blood Red Dragon Beginning of Part Two - Chapters 12-22

##### Verse 1

The first eleven chapters make up the first half of the book of Revelation. Beginning with this chapter (12) we are entering the second half of the book (chp. 12-22). The trials and triumphs of the Church of Christ are the central theme of this section of The Revelation. Dr. McDowell states the basic issue briefly, simply, and succinctly in these words—

"God's sovereignty over the world in Jesus Christ has been proclaimed. By the series of visions under the breaking of the seals of the scroll, John has shown how that sovereignty stands as an established fact over against the problems of history which seem to deny it. But now it remains to portray the manner in which this rule of God has been projected into history and how its projection precipitates the inevitable conflict with the Caesars. The story of Revelation from this point on is the story of the conflict between the sovereignty of God in Jesus Christ and the pretended sovereignty of Satan expressed through the rulers of Rome." (Edward A. McDowell, *The Meaning and Message of The Book of Revelation*, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1951, p. 129.

It is generally true that in the first eleven chapters the vantage point was the earth. The events of chapter 12 (and following) are seen from the viewpoint of heaven.

In verse one, the first woman to appear in *The Revelation* is a vital part of the vision. In the Old Testament the Theocratic Kingdom is pictured as a woman in travail (see Isaiah 26:17, 66:7; Micah 4:10 - read R. H. Charles on this verse). The metaphor of childbirth is common in the New Testament - John 16:21; Galations 4:19.

The "great sign" (first in a series of signs) was "a woman having been clothed (*with* - not in text) the sun with "a crown of twelve stars." The imagery as a whole is clear enough, but the details are impossible to identify with certainty. This much is certain that Christ is the "masculine child" who will conquer Satan - (see Genesis 3:15). (See note on *Virgin Birth* immediately following chapter 12.)

#### Verse 2

This verse contains a paraphrase of Micah 4:10, where the daughter of Zion, the earthly Jerusalem that foreshadows the heavenly Jerusalem, is in travail before the Lord.

#### Verse 3

The second in this series of signs is observed "in heaven." The second sign was "a great red dragon" who was the adversary of God. The dragon is identified as Satan in vs. 9 (see Daniel 7:7; 8:10).

#### Verse 4

Satan tries to destroy the child (the Christ). Satan's attempts to destroy our Lord from Herod's slaying of the infants, the Temptation, to the Cross, etc. are most certainly involved in this symbolism. John declares that Satan "stood before the woman being about to bear, in order that (*hina* clause - purpose clause) he might devour her child whenever she bears (or delivers)."

#### Verse 5

"She bore a masculine son (following Alexander Campbell's Translation) - (*hion arsen* literally says a *male son*, but this is redundant. Campbell reasons that the emphasis was on the masculinity or strength of the son.) The great Shepherd of the

sheep was seized (*hērpasthē* - 1st aor. passive - was seized by someone (God) in a single act) to God and to His throne." This imagery depicts the Ascension of Christ.

*Verse 6*

"The woman fled" to "a place having been prepared from (*apo* - God was the source of the preparation) God, in order that there they might nourish her 1260 days." This is the same amount of time God gave His two witnesses to prophecy (see 11:3).

### SECTION 36

#### Text 12:7-12

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven saying,

Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony. and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

#### Initial Questions 12:7-12

1. Read Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1, and Jude 9, then read vs. 7.
2. What was the outcome of the War - vs. 8?
3. Discuss and compare your image of Satan with the biblical information about his person - vs. 9.
4. Read Job 1:6-12 and vs. 10 - discuss and compare.
5. What enabled the saints to overcome Satan - vs. 11?
6. Will the powers of darkness continue to tempt man - vs. 12?

## Verse 7

The grammar of this verse is difficult. There was a war "in heaven" (see Zechariah 3:1ff) between Michael and his angels, and The Dragon and his angels. The Dragon is Satan; but who is Michael? The Jehovah's Witnesses distort completely the person of Michael - when they identify him as Jesus Christ (claiming as they do that Christ is a created being). We first meet Michael the Archangel in Daniel 10:13 (see Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Eerdman, 1949, pp. 226-227), and then in Jude 9.

Negative critics attempt to ground John's symbolism, etc. in the Apocrypha, i.e., *The Book of Enoch*, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and *the Apocalypse of Moses*. This is absolutely unnecessary as the issues are already clearly mentioned in the Old Testament aspect of God's Word. (For good discussion of *Michael* - see *Hasting's Bible Dictionary*, and *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* for article *Michael*.) In Daniel's great prophecy it is Michael the archangel who sustains the cause of Israel and spiritual Israel (or The Church) in *The Revelation*. This is especially his work at the time of the great tribulation and just before the resurrection of the dead. (See Daniel 12:1; I Thess. 4:16 - Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, Eerdmans, 1952 reprint - for learned but simple statement of this phrase of Paul's doctrine of the "Last Things." The critical value of Vos' work is vitiated, because he does not give usable bibliographical information. This practice is acceptable for popular works, but certainly not for seriously advanced studies.)

## Verse 8

Satan and his angels "warred" "but prevailed not, neither (*oude* - not even was their place found any more (*eti* - still) in heaven." The power of darkness will not be victorious over the power of light. This is the Christian's hope! (See Luke 10:18; John 12:31 - for Christ's assertion of His final victory over Satan.)

## Verse 9

"The great dragon was cast (*eblēthē* - 1st aor. pass. - someone (God) - threw Satan out in a single act. It was not a struggle which required a process of determining who was sovereign - God or Satan). John describes Satan with further

proper names. In Semitic thought - names always stand for a characteristic of the person. "The being called one (*haloumenos* - present-passive participle - continually being called by others) Devil, and Satan, the deceiving one (*ho planōn* - present - active - participle - the one continually deceiving - it is not merely an erratic deception, but a perpetual, never ceasing program) the whole earth (*holēn oikoumenēn* - whole populated earth (world in sense of people) this is one of ten or so times this word appears in the New Testament. We derive the word ecumenical from it, though it is not used in its biblical sense (necessarily) in contemporary ecumenical theology) was cast (same form as above) to the earth" in a single act.

*Verse 10*

Because Satan has been once for all cast down, John now reveals anew the message of our hope. "The salvation, and the power, and the kingdom (reign) of our God (each of these nouns have a definite article), and the power (or authority - same Greek term) of his Christ (*anointed one* - Christ is Greek equivalent (?) of Hebrew term translated Messiah), because (*hōti*) the accuser of our brethren (this name for Satan is not used elsewhere in the New Testament) was cast down (1st aor. cast in a single act - once for all - same form as discussed in vs. 9) the one accusing them before our God night and day."

*Verse 11*

"And they (our brethren or Christians - only—this vs. is eloquent testimony against contemporary universalism) overcame (*eniksesan* - 1st aor. - act. ind. they overcame in a single act - once nad for all - as a matter of fact) him (the accuser of the brethren), because of (the cause of the victory of the Saints) the blood of the Lamb." Here the vicarious atonement of Christ is once more asserted! (See appendix on *The Blood*.) "And because of the Word of their witness (implying the necessity of being loyal to Christ in order to obtain victory)." We see here the place of Christ in our redemption coupled with our faithfulness to the end. Both are essential for our salvation! "And they loved not (*ouk* stands after *kai* and before *ēgapesan* for emphasis on the not - 'absolutely not') their life until death." Jesus declared that whoever loves his life more than Him will surely lose life. Here we see an example of those who loved The Lord and His Word more than anything, even security, that this world could offer. Many Christians in non-western (some European countries too) have learned this same lesson.

*Verse 12*

The transitional preposition "Therefore" means on account of the victory through Christ "be glad (*euphrainesthe* - present imperative - middle voice - heaven is commanded to express joy continually)."

John then continues with a warning to the earth and sea—"because the devil came down to you having (constantly having) great anger, (*thumon* - rage, boiling animosity) knowing that he has a short time." Satan's time is limited by God; and Satan therefore takes full advantage of his permitted period to bring death, destruction, and temptation to the saints.

## SECTION 37

## Text 12:13-17(18)

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child. 14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished, for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:

## Initial Questions 12:13-18

1. What change has taken place between vs. 1 and vs. 13 with regards to the location of Satan's influence?
2. How does nature help "the woman in vs. 13? Does this show God's ultimate control over all things?
3. The dragon prepared to make war with whom in verse 17?

*Verse 13*

The dragon momentarily rallied from his defeat, and immediately began pursuing "the woman who bore the masculine child." Though it is too difficult to consider here in our brief commentary, the woman probably symbolizes both the mother of

our Virgin born Lord and Spiritual Israel - The Church. If we were producing a technical commentary this is the interpretation the present author would attempt to defend, or at least make feasible. Note that the action is again "on the earth."

*Verse 14*

Satan relentlessly attacks the "masculine child" in order to destroy him, but God's providential protection sustains in the hours of greatest threat. The identification of the time element here (as "a time and times and half a time") with the 1260 days of vs. 6 is most helpful. In both verses, the scope of time covered the period of the woman's nourishment.

*Verse 15*

Satan seeks to destroy the woman by way of a great amount of water (*hōs* or *as* - like a river - John is not declaring that it was a river). It is clear from this verse that Satan has great powers.

*Verse 16*

Nature is here utilized by God to protect the woman. Satan and his angels have great unnatural powers, because "the dragon cast out of his mouth" a river (see vs. 15 - *hōs* like or as a river). This clearly implies that the working of mighty deeds do not always find their source of power in God - often the source is Satan. Today we have many who preach things which are contrary to the scriptures and at the same time claim that God is blessing their ministry by enabling them to perform mighty deeds. The claim is easy enough to make, but it is impossible to prove that the deeds are of God!

*Verse 17*

Satan could not destroy The woman, as the woman stands for both the mother of Christ and Spiritual Israel or The Church. Christ said that "the gates of hades will not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), so he (Satan) redirected his forces to attack the Church. John calls *The Church* "the ones keeping (present participle - continually keeping) the commandments of God, and the ones having (present participle - continually having) the witness of Jesus." This description could only fit The Church of Jesus Christ giving faithful testimony. The two marks of a New Testament Christian are always (1) keeping the commandments; and (2) bearing testimony to Christ as Lord.

*Verse 18*

The 1901 translation places this last verse with chapter 13 and makes it verse one of that chapter instead of verse 18 of chapter 12. Why? We cannot here enter textual criticism, nor the problem of verse and chapter divisions (neither of which were in the original or oldest extant Greek texts), but the text reads "and he stood (*estathē* - 1st aor. passive voice - 3rd person sing. - instead of *estathēn* - 1st aor. passive 1st person singular) on the sand of the sea." The antecedent of *he* connects grammatically with vs. 17, but if the text reads *I*, then it would connect best chapter 13:1. There are texts which have both readings (not the same text), but the best attested reading is "he stood."

Note: For advanced students the following works will be imperative. H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit (Creation and Chaos in Beginning Time and End Time)* - this work is a comparative critique of *Genesis* chp 1 and *Revelation* chp. 12. This work takes a negative attitude toward God's Word via its form-analysis; and Pierre Prigent, *Histoire de l'exégèse*, J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1959 - (this is a history of the exegesis of Revelation, chp. 12 - excellent.)

## Review Questions - Chapter 12

1. Read Genesis 3:15 and then discuss the significance of the victory of the masculine child over Satan.
2. Discuss Satan's attempts to destroy Christ as recorded in the Gospel record.
3. Who prepared the hiding place of the woman - vs 6?
4. Who do the Jehovah's Witnesses say that Michael is - vs 7?
5. How can we harmonize Christ's victory over evil and the empirical fact that evil persists to this day - vs. 8?
6. What enabled the saints to attain final victory - vs. 11?
7. Is the vicarious atonement of Christ alone enough for our salvation - vs. 11?
8. How does Satan's knowledge of his limited time affect his efforts to destroy the work of God - vs. 12?
9. Does Satan have supernatural power - vs. 15?
10. Discuss Satan's power in light of the contemporary claims to be able to perform miracles.
11. What are two marks of a Christian - vs. 17?
12. Discuss why the present author places vs. 18 with chp. 12 instead of placing it as vs. 1 - chp. 13. The 1901 gives the reading "he stood," yet still places the verse in chp. 13. What is the antecedent of *he* in this case?