

## Revelation Lesson 12

Revelation Chapter 12

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

*Website: <http://www.kjvbiblestudies.net>*

*Email: [mail@KjvBibleStudies2.net](mailto:mail@KjvBibleStudies2.net)*

**Introduction:** Revelation Chapter 12 begins another significant parenthetical segment of the book. Chapters 12 and 13 present seven significant personalities during the Tribulation. In this chapter, five are addressed: (1) the great woman, (2) the great red dragon, (3) the man child, (4) Michael, and (5) the remnant of the woman. Each is described, giving insight into their identities.

### I. Woman Appears Clothed with the Sun

*(Rev 12:1) And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*

*(Rev 12:2) And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

After a brief return to the sequence of events, the seventh trumpet sounded, then another parenthetical section of the book begins. This parenthetical section is a digression from the sequential development of events in the prophetic section of the book. Such parenthetical sections present an overview of other things taking place during the Tribulation. In this instance, the identities of many who will take part in the upcoming events are revealed. There is an obvious metaphor intended.

The woman, by her very description, is not a normal human; but rather symbolic of a far greater personage. She was "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet." This woman was of great importance in the metaphor used to describe her exaltation. The twelve stars are the clue revealing her identity. In Genesis 37:9, Joseph dreamed of the sun and moon along with eleven stars bowing down to him. There, the dream was of Israel and specifically his sons.

It would seem apparent that this unusual description is of Israel. Indeed, Israel is one of the key focal points in the Tribulation. Moreover, the woman described was expectant, in labor, and about to give birth. In the greater view of history, this in all likelihood refers to the birth of Christ by way of God's agency of Israel. See verse 5. This parallels Isaiah 66:7 where prior to Israel's travail (in the Tribulation), she brought forth a man-child. The first personage described is Israel. They certainly were before the church and to this day are God's chosen people.

*(Rev 12:3) 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.*

*(Rev 12:4) And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

John saw another personage. This second personality, the “great red dragon,” clearly is the devil as indicated in verse 9. He is described as having “seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.” This will be addressed further in Chapter 13:1 and particularly in 17:9-14. In short, however, these clearly refer to the political activities of the antichrist. Less clear is the significance of the dragon casting a “third part of the stars of heaven to the earth.” It would appear that this chapter is not time-based.

John is given view of events which have stretched across the course of history from the dawn of time through the end of the Tribulation. The reference to the devil drawing one-third of the stars of heaven to him and then to the earth with him may be this. It may refer to his rebellion against God in ages past when he influenced as many as one third of the angels of heaven to join with him in his revolt. They all with him were cast to the earth until the time of judgment. He then became the god of this world and the prince of the power of the air.

The fallen stars became his host of demonic fallen angels. There is no other objective substantiation to this view in Scripture. However, the above-described scenario does seem consistent with what we know of Satan’s realm. The reference to the dragon waiting to devour the woman’s child, whence it was born, seems apparent. When Jesus was born, Satan did all in his power to destroy the Christ child through jealousy stirred in Herod the Great.

His slaughter of the male children within and without Bethlehem would seem to be the effect of Satan’s efforts to devour the woman’s child described here. The second personage, without question, is the devil. He certainly fulfills his purpose during the Tribulation.

*(Rev 12:5) And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

*(Rev 12:6) And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*

John goes on to describe the woman (Israel) bringing forth “a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” The man child brought forth of the woman without question is Jesus Christ. The reference to Him ruling all nations with a “rod of iron” is direct fulfilment of Psalm 2:9 which clearly is Messianic.

*Psa 2:9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

In Revelation 2:27, Jesus made clear such rule would be His. Furthermore, the man child of the woman in due season “was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” There is little question this refers to the ascension of our Lord as recorded in Acts 1:11. Thus the third personage of the Day of the Lord is indisputably (3) Jesus Christ.

In verse 6, John makes further comment regarding Israel before proceeding to the next personage. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. That this pertains directly to the Tribulation is evident in the reference to the 1,260 days. This is forty-two months or three and one-half years. It is referred to in 11:2-3 and 12:14, among other places, referring to one half of the Tribulation.

The flight of the woman into the wilderness to a place of refuge prepared by God would appear to be direct intervention by God during the last half of the Tribulation to preserve and protect Israel from the wrath of the devil. More will be addressed in this regard in 12:13-16. In the greater scheme of events of the Tribulation, the 1,260 days noted likely refer to the final half thereof. It is at this time that Satan turns on Israel through the antichrist who breaks his peace settlement with them.

## **II. War in Heaven**

*(Rev 12:7) And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,*

*(Rev 12:8) And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.*

John proceeds to make record of war in heaven betwixt Michael and the devil. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; The word translated as war (polemos) can also be rendered as a ‘battle.’ There is no question as to the outcome of the battle. The devil and his angels are defeated. The fourth personality in the Tribulation is (4) Michael the archangel. The greater question however is when this battle takes place. Several views are generally advanced.

The first is that the war in question took place when Satan rebelled against God in ages past resulting in their expulsion from heaven. Another view is that the war in question is conflict in heaven between Satan and God during the Tribulation. This view proposes that Satan apparently has still been allowed access before God down through the ages as the accuser of the brethren. See Job 1. A third view is that there has been a spiritual war going on ever since Satan rebelled against God and continues to this day.

The war will come to a head during the Tribulation when Satan is no longer allowed access to heaven. Though this is not the final climactic battle with Satan, it is significant in the scope of the Tribulation in that Satan's wrath is taken out against God's people on the earth. This third view is the likely position as the following text will show.

*(Rev 12:9) 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.*

Satan apparently has been allowed limited access to the throne of God down through the ages. This is clear from Job 1. However, at what may be the midpoint of the Tribulation, 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. The text removes any question as to the identity of the dragon, he is "that old serpent," no doubt hearkening back to the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

He is further described as "the Devil." The latter title is more of a descriptive than a name. It is translated from (diabolov) diabolos and literally means a 'slanderer,' a 'false accuser,' or simply, a 'liar.' Indeed, he has deceived the whole world. Jesus, in John 8:44, noted him as the original liar and the father thereof. His name more properly is Satan which literally means 'adversary.' He here is described as being "cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." The following verse seems to indicate the time when this takes place.

*(Rev 12:10) And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

*(Rev 12:11) 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.*

As John witnessed these events, he wrote, And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and

the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night". The thought clearly indicates this particular casting out of Satan from heaven is in the latter stages of the Tribulation, perhaps coincides with the seventh trumpet noted in 11:15. When this expulsion takes place, John heard a voice in heaven proclaiming the coming of not only salvation and strength, but the kingdom of God as well.

That clearly is at the conclusion of the Tribulation. Moreover, the final phrase noting that the accuser of the brethren cast down implies past tense. Also noted, is that Satan has been allowed access to God to accuse our brethren night and day. Praise God, we have "an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1), greater than he.

Referring to what evidently are saints saved during the Tribulation in verse 11, John records, 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. These brethren in that day overcome (get the victory) over the devil by (1) "the blood of the Lamb" and (2) "the word of their testimony."

Powerful is the effect of the blood of the Lamb in the battle against Satan. Even in this day, it is a powerful deterrent to Satan's influence. The blood protects our position in Christ. Pleading the blood also brings victory over temptation and other Satanic influences. The word of our testimony is a powerful deterrent to Satanic influence. Clearly implied is outspoken testimony. It is taking the offensive spiritually.

It gives direct victory over Satan's power. Moreover, the brethren in that day will love not their lives unto the death. They will be willing to have their heads removed for the name of Jesus.

*(Rev 12:12) 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.*

*(Rev 12:13) And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*

John additionally records what the great voice in heaven further announced. When Satan's access to heaven is removed and he is cast out once and for all, the heavenly voice directs the heavens and those therein to rejoice. However, he also warned of woe to those on the earth "for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Satan apparently comes down in great anger, having been evicted from heaven. Moreover, he knows he only has a short time left.

The word translated as short (oligov oligos) also has the sense of 'little.' There is little time left for him. This also would indicate this battle in heaven takes place during the Tribulation.

In verse 13 upon being cast out of heaven, the dragon (i.e., the devil) "persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." Though Satan undoubtedly has been at the root of all anti-Semitism down through the ages, it would seem his fury against Israel will reach its apex during the last half of the Tribulation. This may be the catalyst which causes the antichrist to break his peace settlement with Israel at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

Satan in great wrath determines to exterminate Israel once and for all. He has failed in destroying the church—they are now in heaven. The remainder of the people of God on earth is Israel. Implied also is that those who turn to Christ during the Tribulation will be, perhaps, considered by Satan and the world to be an extension of Israel even as in the earliest days of the church.

*(Rev 12:14) 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, from the face of the serpent.*

John records God's intervention to deliver Israel in that day. As established earlier in the chapter, the woman is Israel. The "time, and times, and half a time" is another way of noting three and one-half years (or, forty-two months, or 1,260 days). See notes for Daniel 12:7.

*Dan 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.*

The providential protection given to Israel by God is what quite apparently are the last three and one half years of the Tribulation. This very well may parallel what Jesus warned in Luke 21:20-21, which see. Moreover, there is striking similarity here to how Moses described Israel's deliverance from Egypt in Exodus 19:4. There, he portrayed God's deliverance then as upon an eagle's wings. A spiritual parallel is found in Isaiah 40:31.

Precisely how or what the eagle's wings are is not made clear. It is apparent from Exodus 19:4 the eagle's wings described there were not literal but a metaphor of God's deliverance of His people then. A similar thought most likely is here as well. During the last half of the Tribulation, God will, through means undefined, give miraculous deliverance and protection to Israel from the enraged onslaught

of the devil.

### **III. The Serpent Cast Water After the Woman as a Flood**

*(Rev 12:15) And 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.*

*(Rev 12:16) 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.*

John gives further clues to this deliverance though perhaps purposefully mysterious. It may be that God does not wish Satan to know the details how He will deliver His people prior to that day. There has been considerable speculation concerning God's protective care of Israel in that day. One popular theory has been that Israel will be spirited away to Petra, the rose city of the dead in Jordan. There is no real Scriptural basis to support that view. However, 12:6 makes clear that God will have a specific place prepared for Israel in that day.

The text does make clear that Satan will send forth some sort of flood against Israel. Whether this is literal or a metaphor of some other means is not clear. Some have speculated this will be the flood of a military invasion intent upon destroying Israel once and for all. (Arabs and Islam to this day would readily rise to such a prospect.)

Whatever form of destruction sent by Satan against Israel, God will directly intervene causing the earth itself to help them by swallowing the flood of destruction sent against her. Again, there most likely is a direct connection between what is recorded here and what Jesus warned for believing Jews in that day. See Luke 21:20-24.

*Luk 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.*

*Luk 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.*

*Luk 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*

*Luk 21:23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.*

*Luk 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be*

*led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

If the satanic flood be what Jesus foretold in Luke, it is apparent then this flood is a military invasion of Israel in that day. It may be the direct intervention by God in swallowing up the enemies of Israel in that day is Christ's return at Armageddon.

*(Rev 12:17) And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

What apparently is the fifth personality of the Tribulation is described. Further credence to the view conceived in the previous verse is made. Satan is vehemently angry (i.e., wrath) with Israel (the woman). He makes war against her seed which will be noted shortly. Of great significance is his engaging in warfare against Israel. This may be the flood described in verse 15. The object of his wrath is directed particularly against "the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

This remnant is more than Israel in general. That they are of the woman, Israel, is clear. However, this remnant are those who (1) "keep the commandments of God," and (2) "have the testimony of Jesus Christ." These clearly are Jews converted to Christ. One of the great purposes of the Tribulation is precisely to that end. As the two witnesses preached and the 144,000 are converted, they in turn fan out preaching the gospel to the Jew and to any gentiles who will listen. ]

It is clear that the Olivet Discourse as recorded in Matthew 24-25 and Luke 21 is directed to believing Jews in that day. They will have turned to Christ and are just beginning to explore the New Testament. The Holy Spirit, perhaps working through the 144,000 witnesses, may direct their attention to the Olivet Discourse to give them guidance as to what is taking place about them. It is to this remnant of believing Jews that the devil turns the fury of His wrath.

The word translated as remnant (λοιπον λοιποy) is more frequently rendered as 'the other,' 'the rest,' or 'the others.' Implied is that not all of Israel will in fact so turn to Christ. However, for those who do, they will face the unmitigated wrath of the devil. Nevertheless, God will send great deliverance for them. And so, the fifth personality of the Tribulation is indicated here as the remnant of believing Israel.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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