

And a great sign was seen in the heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; Rev 12:1

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton November 2, 2005

Sources -

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic Christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible texts, commentaries, and Strong's definition's are taken from the excellent source the e-Sword Bible computer program unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction -

In Revelation chapter 12 we will see an amazing number of things. First we'll see a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet giving birth to a son who will rule the world with an iron rod. This must be Christ and the woman Israel. Her child is caught up into heaven which Christ was. Satan attempts to destroy the child but fails. She is then persecuted by the dragon but is given a haven in the desert for 3 ½ years. That is during the second half of the tribulation's seven years. Satan then fights against Michael the archangel in heaven and is defeated and cast down to the earth. He then persecutes the woman's remnant who are amazingly also believers in Christ. At this point in the tribulation Israel has still not accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah. This remnant cannot be the church which was translated in Revelation 5 nor those who come to the faith during the tribulation and are martyred in chapter 6. Who can these remnant of Israel's seed be who also believe in Jesus Christ?

Lesson Text - Revelation Chapter 12-13

Rev 12:1 And a great sign was seen in the 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 **being with child** she cried, *being* in travail, and in pain to bring forth.

Rev 12:3 And another sign was seen in the heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems;

Rev 12:4 and his tail draws the third part of the stars of the heaven; and he cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, in order that when she brought forth he might devour her child.

Comments -

having seven heads and ten horns –these are much the same as John sees on the beast king in Revelation chapter 13.

Rev 13:1 *And I stood upon the sand of the sea; and I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and upon its horns ten diadems, and upon its heads names of blasphemy.*

These symbols give clues to the origin of the evil national influences that again reveal themselves through demonic agency in the short reign of the beast.

having seven heads - the intelligent beings that guide the courses of the nations from behind the scenes. We saw that when the prince of Persia in Daniel 10:13 hindered the angel of God from coming to reveal to Daniel the meaning of the prophecies for three weeks. The angel of God only gained freedom to go after Michael the Archangel came to his aid. The prince of Persia was very strong. But God's power is stronger.

and ten horns - are sources of political power of the earthly kingdoms and nations alide with the beast which are controlled by demonic forces.

on his heads seven diadems – *These are the seven ancient kingdoms and/or the demonic princes which ruled behind the scenes. These ancient kingdoms held Israel captive at various times.*

his tail draws the third part of the stars of the heaven – *Satan lead many angelic beings with him in rebellion in the ancient past.*

Rev 12:5 And she brought forth a male son, who shall shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to his throne.

Comments -

a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet – it makes the most sense to see the woman as a symbol of the Kingdom of Israel which is still on the earth at this time.

and upon her head a crown of twelve stars Her crown of the twelve stars could represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

And she brought forth a male son, who shall shepherd all the nations with an iron rod and the people of Israel did this through the Tribe of Judah. The Messiah was born into this life to accomplish His Father's will of redeeming the great prize He desired on the earth. But He will return to rule the earth with a firm hand.

and her child was caught up to God and to his throne After this the child, Jesus, was caught away to heaven as a first fruits of God's desire and we, the church, will follow Him either through death and resurrection or by way of the instant translation of those in the faith who are alive at the time of His coming for them.

Rev 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has there a place prepared of God, that they should nourish her there **a thousand two hundred and sixty days.**

Comments -

The ancient Israelites used a lunar calendar of 12 thirty day months. That is a 360 day year. The 360 days X 3.5 years = 1260 days. The two witnesses that we just saw in Revelation Chapter 11, cried out against the wickedness of the nations from Jerusalem for exactly 1260 days before God allowed the beast from the abyss to kill them. If this period of protection for the woman is 3 ½ years also and it follows in sequence after the first 3 ½ years of judgement of the nations by the two witnesses, then this period of protection of the woman must be the second half of the tribulation the great.

Rev 12:7 And there was war in the heaven: Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon. And the dragon fought, and his angels;

Comments -

John's perspective was looking into the heavens when he saw the woman (about to give birth to a son) she being *clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet* and the dragon, who is Satan, prepared to attack the child. Satan until this point has been allowed into the heavens, but this is the time for his forcible removal from God's presence along with that of his followers.

Rev 12:8 and he prevailed not, nor was their place found any more in the heaven.

Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent, he who is called Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole habitable world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Comments -

Though it may seem strange to many, God has not removed Satan's power yet, nor that of his followers despite their rebellion long ago. He could do this as easily as He created the universe we are all a part of. But He intends for Michael, the archangel and the others still loyal to God, to wage this war in His strength, overpowering Lucifer and casting his entire throng out of God's presence down to the earth where they will be dealt with further.

Rev 12:10 And I heard a great voice in the 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 has been cast out, who accused them before our God day and night:

Rev 12:11 and *they* have overcome him by reason of the blood of the Lamb, and by reason of the word of their testimony, and have not loved their life even unto death.

Comments -

The war between Satan's forces and God's and the casting out of Satan has come at this time. Before this Satan has been able to enter the heavens and God's presence despite his rebellion before the creation of Adam and Eve. We see him in the story of Job, freely entering God's presence, able to accuse God of protecting the righteous too much, and challenging Him that with enough access he could make Job curse God openly.

Job 1:6a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah; and Satan came also among them.

Job 1:7 And Jehovah said to Satan, Whence comest thou? And Satan answered Jehovah and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Job 1:8 And Jehovah said to Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and abstaineth from evil?

Paul warns the believers in his New Testament epistles to beware of the powers of the air and to put on the whole armor of God to protect against them.

6:10 For the rest, brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the might of his strength.

Eph 6: Put on the panoply of God, that ye may be able to stand against the artifices of the devil:

Eph 6:12 because our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies.

Eph 6:13 For this reason take to you the panoply of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having accomplished all things, to stand.

Rev 12:12 Therefore be full of delight, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. **Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great rage, knowing he has a short time.**

Comments -

Therefore be full of delight, ye heavens... - which they now have every reason to do because the accuser of the brethren has finally been cast down out of the the presence of God and the Holy angels.

...Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has come down to you - and conversely the inhabitants left on the earth have yet more agony and woe to suffer because Satan has been cast to the earth, having lost his access to the heavens, and he is now full of wrath desiring to harm for harms sake; as the old truism says, misery loves company.

....knowing he has a short time -refers to the short time remaining in the Tribulation. The two witnesses have born testimony and judgment to the earth's nations for three and one half years and now John sees Satan cast down to earth with only a short time to work any remaining dead. One of these is to attempt to torment the Godly woman for another three and one half years. But she is protected from him (see vs. 12:14). It would make sense to conclude that he does this during the second half of the seven years of the tribulation the great.

Rev 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he had been cast out into the earth, he persecuted the woman which bore the male *child* .

Rev 12:14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the desert into her place, where she is nourished there a time, and times, and half a time, from *the* face of the serpent.

Rev 12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth behind the woman water as a river, that he might make her be *as* one carried away by a river.

Rev 12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

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

Comments -

Who are these seed of the woman whom Satan persecutes? They cannot be the main body of the Church of Jesus Christ because they, having faith in His sacrifice, were called up into the heavens at Christ's sudden return as Paul told the Thessalonians. John experienced this in his vision earlier in the Revelation in chapter 4 when he heard a voice like a trumpet call him up into God's presence.

Rev 4:1 *After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will shew thee the things which must take place after these things.*

That was a clear precursor of the translation of the church into the heavens at the time of Christ's return for us.

1Th 4:15 *(For this we say to you in the word of the Lord, that *we*, the living, who remain to the coming of the Lord, are in no way to anticipate those who have fallen asleep;*

1Th 4:16 *for the Lord himself, with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice and with trump of God, shall descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ shall rise first;*

1Th 4:17 *then *we*, the living who remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall be always with the Lord.*

went to make war with the remnant of her seed - Satan clearly torments some of the very seed of the woman, who remain upon this earth yet are not given the same hiding place in the desert to seek safety along with her. They are stated to be of the physical seed of the woman who is surely Israel. So they are also of Israel and not Gentiles. But Israel even to this time in the tribulation does not seem to have accepted Jesus Christ as Messiah. John tells us in Revelation chapter 19

at the end of the tribulation that when Christ returns to the earth, which will be at Jerusalem, He will defend them against the united forces with the beast arrayed against the city.

Rev 19:19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army.

Rev 19:20 And the beast was taken, and the false prophet that *was* with him, who wrought the signs before him by which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and those that worship his image. Alive were both cast into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone;

Zechariah also prophecies that Judah will in the end times be back in Jerusalem and they will see the Messiah and finally recognize Him for who he is. The Old Testament passage also mentions that previous to this they had rejected His testimony and pierced Him. At this later time the seed of Judah living again (*and only since 1948*) in the land of Israel will grieve serverly over what they have done in the past. But He will accept them as He does all who are penitent and they will be His people.

:8In that day will Jehovah defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that stumbleth among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David as God, as the Angel of Jehovah before them.

Zec 12:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Zec 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look on me whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Zec 12:11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

Judah's revelation of the Christ is at the end of the tribulation's seven years when Christ has returned. But this beginning of Israel's fierce persecution by Satan is around the middle of the seven years. Even those who came to faith in Jesus after the translation of the church in the early stages of the tribulation are already martyred for their faith and in God's presence by this time.

Rev 6:9 And when it opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;

who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus - the mystery here is that these who Satan presecutes in leui of Israel are physically of Israel, yet they are also believers in Christ. That may be why they are not mixed in with the rest of Israel which has not yet accepted Jesus as Messiah. They come to that realization by God's revelation at the end of the tribulation's seven years. Then who can these Israelite Christians be since most of the church has been translated or martyred long before this point? They must be a sizeable and powerful body of believers to draw Satan's wrath. Perhaps they are the 144,000 first mentioned in Revelation 7. They were 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel called by an angel of God, commissioned and sealed to do His will. But that mission was never revealed. It would make sense that they have a true understanding of Christ and of God's plans for Israel. But are they still alive on the earth at this time? They appear to be at this time, being mentioned once more in the Revelation in chapter 14 in the presence of God.

Rev 14:1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing upon mount Zion, and with him a hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written upon their foreheads.

Another mystery to consider might be, have any other people of Israel come to faith in Jesus at this time in the tribulation?

Conclusion -

We have seen In chapter 12 of the Revelation, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet who gave birth to a son who shall rule the world with an iron rod. This son is clearly Christ and that means the woman must represent Israel. Her son, Jesus Christ, was taken up into the clouds in front of believers. Satans effort to destroy His mission on the earth was defeated by God's acceptance of His sacrifice for sin. The woman as we saw was then persecuted for a short time it seems. But she was provided with a haven somewhere in the desert for the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation. We also saw Satan waging war in the heavens against Michael the archangel. But he is defeated and cast down to the earth where he persecutes a remnant of the woman's seed who are also also believers in Christ. The thought is offered that perhaps this seed contains the 144,000 of the twelve tribes of Israel who God ordained to His ministry in Revelation chapter 7.