

Revelation 12

Introduction:

Chapters 12-14 of Revelation give us some details of the chief “actors” in the events unfolded by the prophecy.

There are seven characters mentioned:

The Woman – 12:1-2, 6, 13-17

The Dragon – 12:3-4, 9-10, 13-17; 13:2, 4

The Man-Child – 12:5

Michael – 12:7

The Beast Out of the Sea – 13:1-8

The Beast Out of the Earth – 13:11-17

The 144,000 Jews – 14:1

I. The Woman Clothed with the Sun – vs. 1-2

The Woman is a symbol of the Nation of Israel:

Because of her description – vs. 1

The ‘sun’, ‘moon’, and ‘stars’ are significant when compared with Joseph’s dream in Gen 37:9-10.

Because of her offspring – vs. 2, 5

The Lord Jesus Christ came forth from Israel. Rm 1:3, Mt 1:17; Lk 3:34; Heb 7:14

Because of Old Testament Prophecy

Isaiah 66:5-8

Because Israel is called the “Wife of the LORD”

See: Is. 54:5-7. Much OT prophesy pictures Israel as the unfaithful wife of Jehovah. Jer 2:2, 20; 3:1, 6; and especially the book of Hosea.

Note: The NT church is likened to a bride (Eph 5:25) rather than a wife; a ‘chaste virgin’ (II Cor 11:2).

Because of the stated nature of the Tribulation period

According to Jer 30:7; Dan 9:24; 12:1, the tribulation period is a time of “Jacob’s trouble”. In Rev 12:13-17 we note that the Woman is severely persecuted.

II. The Great Red Dragon – vs. 3-4

There is no difficulty here, verse 9 clearly identifies him as Satan.

a. The Description of the Great Red Dragon – vs. 3

Great (i.e. fearsome) Red (the color of blood – Jn 8:44)

Seven Heads – Seven (number of perfection); Heads (speaks of wisdom)

He is a very wise deceiver – Ez 28:12

Ten Horns

According to Dan 7:7, 20-24, the horns are symbolic of Rev 17:3, the 10 horns represent the governmental base of the Antichrist controlled and energized by Satan. Rev 17:12; 13:24

Seven Crowns – authority over the kingdoms of this world

b. The Tail of the Great Red Dragon – vs. 4

The “stars of heaven” refer to the angelic hosts associated with the initial rebellion of Lucifer (recorded in Is. 14:12-14 and Ez 28:12-17).

Revelation 12

Stars symbolize angels – Rev 1:20; Job 38:7; Is 14:13; Dan 8:10. (Caution: ‘stars’ can represent a number of things – e.g. the 12 Tribes of Israel, Rev 12:1; or literal celestial bodies, Rev 8:12) This would account for the unseen spirit world of darkness – Eph 6:12, for we know Satan has a kingdom (Mk 3:22-26) and operates through a network of spirit beings (devils) Luke 9:1 and following.

c. The Battle of the Seeds – vs. 4

Here Satan is pictured as seeking the destruction of the Man-Child, Jesus Christ. This is the great conflict began with Gen 3:15. Throughout the Bible, we read of Satan’s efforts to destroy the seed of the woman, and ultimately Jesus:

Cain killed Abel – Gen 4:8

Unholy inter-marriage – Gen 6:1-4

Murder of boys in Egypt – Ex 1:16-22

Extermination of the royal seed – II Kings 11:1-3

Murder of the innocents – Matt 2:16-18 (alluded to in Rev 12:4)

The Temptation of the Lord – Matt 4:5-6

During the ministry of the Lord – e.g. Jn 10:31, 39

In the Garden of Gethsemane – Lk 22:42-44

d. The Names and Titles of Satan – vs. 9-10

Devil – slanderer – I Pt 5:8; Eph 6:11; II Tim 2:26; Jn 13:2

Satan – adversary – Job 1:6; Zech 2:1-2; I Chron 21:1; II Cor 2:11

Old Serpent – subtle, sharp, poisonous –

Gen 3:1; Ps 58:4; 140:3; Pro 23:32; Ecc 10:8; II Cor 11:3

Accuser – Job 1:6-7; Eph 2:2; I Pt 5:8; Rev 12:10

Satan currently has access to earth, the air, and the very throne of God.

He is the ‘accuser of our brethren’, which means he is accusing Christians when they sin, but praise God we have an Advocate – I Jn 2:1-2.

Dragon

In nature, dragons were amphibious reptiles. (Ps 74:13; 148:7; Is 27:1; Ez 29:3). They were possibly crocodiles and as such were fearsome creatures of cunning power – yet often innocent looking.

The description of Rev 12:3-4 goes beyond a natural creature.

Other Bible titles

Apollyon – destroyer – Rev 9:11

Beelzebub – “lord of the house” – Matthew 10:25

Prince – Jn 14:30; Eph 2:2

Murderer/Liar – Jn 8:44

Evil (one) – Jn 17:15

From this chapter alone we learn that Satan is a being of great power and influence. Praise the Lord we overcome him through trusting the Lord, vs. 11 – I Jn 4:4.

III. The Man-Child – vs. 5

This is the Lord Jesus Christ – Isaiah 7:14

Revelation 12

This verse mentions three important events – past, present, and future:

His Incarnation – Micah 4:9-10; 5:2

His Ascension – Heb 10:12

His Reign – Ps 2:8-9; Micah 5:2; Rev 19:15

IV. War in Heaven – vs. 7-11

a. The Combatants – vs. 7

Michael

The archangel (Jude 9) changed with protection of the nation of Israel (Dan 12:1).

Michael's angels

Whenever the Bible speaks of angels, we must remember there is an innumerable company of them (Heb 12:22) organized into various divisions – “thrones, dominions, principalities, powers” (Col 1:16). The armies of heaven consist of hosts of angels. Rev 19:14; Jud 14-15; II Kgs 6:16-17.

The Dragon - Satan

The Dragon's angels

Satan rules a spirit kingdom of wicked, fallen angels. These too are organized into principalities, powers, rulers of world darkness, etc. (Eph 6:12; Rm 8:38). See: Dan 10:13, 20.

b. The Location of the Battle – vs. 7

At this present moment, Satan is the ‘prince of the power of the air’ with access to both heaven and earth. The great battle will be staged in heaven – probably the “second heaven” – “the air” – space.

c. The Time of the Battle

It is important to note the two “time verses’ in this chapter, vs 6, 14. 1260 days (vs 6) or 3 ½ times (vs 14) clearly indicate this battle occurs in the middle of the tribulation period.

d. The Outcome of the Battle – vs. 8-9

Satan and his hosts are defeated and deprived of access to heaven. Satan is cast down into the earth. This is in fulfillment of Isaiah 14:12 and Luke 10:18.

e. The Onlookers of the Battle – vs. 10-11

It seems the redeemed of all ages will witness this heavenly defeat of Satan. It will be an occasion of great rejoicing – vs. 12.

The loud voice – vs. 10

This is the voice of the saved. The pray of Rev 6:10 has now been answered.

The cry of victory – vs. 10

“Now is come salvation...” refers to deliverance – not salvation from our sins which is instantaneous when we believe on Christ. This is a recognition that the end is finally come, the day of victory is in sight.

f. The Work of Satan as revealed in this chapter

Note the works of the Devil here:

Revelation 12

He opposes God Himself – vs. 4

He opposes God's angels – vs. 7

He opposes God's saints – vs. 10

He opposes God's people – vs. 13

g. Overcoming Satan – vs. 11

This verse gives three very important ways Satan can be overcome:

Through Salvation – “...by the blood of the Lamb...”

Through Scripture – “...by the word of their testimony...”

Through Surrender – “...loved not their lives...”

V. Woe on Earth – vs. 12-17

a. The Third Woe – vs. 12

Rev 8:13 – an angel pronounced 3 “woes”:

The first woe – the plague of demonic locusts – Rev 9:1-12 – 5th trumpet

The second woe – the vast army – Rev 9:15-21; 11:13-14 – 6th trumpet

The third woe – part of the 7th trumpet and is the casting down of Satan

b. The Significance of Satan being Cast Down to the Earth

A Period of great wrath – vs. 12

A snake with its back broken is defeated, but still very dangerous. Satan is in his ‘death-throes’, and is set upon wreaking havoc.

The Beginning of “GREAT Tribulation”

Rev 4-19 covers a seven year period usually called the “Tribulation”.

According to Dan 12:1, after Michael defeats Satan in heaven, the GREAT Tribulation begins.

Satan enters the Antichrist

According to Dan 9:27 and Rev 6:2; the ‘coming prince’ will appear as the messiah of Israel, will allow the temple to be rebuilt, sacrifices to resume, and make a covenant with Israel.

In the middle of this 7 year period (week) he will turn against Israel. This coincides with the casting down of Satan to the earth. Satan will enter the Antichrist, the dictator he has hitherto controlled, and as Rev 13:2 indicates, will give him his power, his seat, and his great authority. Such a change may be likened to the Devil entering Judas Iscariot. Lk 22:3

c. Satanic Persecution of Israel – vs. 13, 15, 17

The covenant broken, the ‘abomination of desolation’ now occupying the Holy place, the Antichrist demanding worship as God, a fearful time of anti-Semitism will break out. Jews will be the prime target of Satan.

The Woman persecuted – vs. 13

Zech 13:8 indicates 2/3 of Israel will perish.

A flood of persecution – vs. 15

Cf. Dan 9:26. This seems to speak of this wide-spread persecution that comes on the orders (from the mouth of) Antichrist. Is 59:19-20.

Attention directed to save Jews – vs. 17

Revelation 12

This verse probably refers to the 144,000, Rev 7:3-4; 14:1. See: Rev 13:7.

d. Divine Protection of Israel – vs. 6:14, 16

Even though the 3 ½ year period is shortened for the 'elect's sake', Matt 24:22, a remnant of Israel will be miraculously delivered from the beast.

A wilderness haven – vs. 6

Some believe this may be the ancient city of Petra, the capital of Edom.

A winged help – vs. 14

This is a reference of divine help – Ex 19:4; Deut 32:11-12.

A wide hell – vs. 16

Is. 11:16 speaks of the Lord doing for Israel in this time things similar to the days of Exodus. In Num 16:31-33 we read of the earth opening up and swallowing the enemies of Moses.

e. The Length of Israel's Woe

Rev 12:6, 14; 13:5 state clearly that this time will last for 3 ½ years. God's purpose in allowing this holocaust is to bring the nation of Israel to Himself – Zechariah 12:2-11; 13:1; 14:1-3.