

Revelation Chapter 12

1) The Woman and the Dragon (12:1-6)

- a) Chapter 12 begins the second half of Revelation.
 - i) Half of the chapters, but not half the message because the message of 7th trumpet is not complete – 7 bowls of wrath are yet to come.
 - ii) John’s work has not been completed.
 - (1) Rev. 10:11 - “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”
 - iii) Most of the characters are the same as in Chapters 1-11, but more detail is given for some of them.
- b) **1** And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. **2** She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. **3** And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. **4** His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. **5** She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, **6** and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days. A great sign appeared in heaven (12:1)
 - i) The word for great is “mega” – a mega sign.
 - (1) Signs were used throughout the gospels for the miracles of Jesus.
 - (2) Through chapters 1-11 John wrote “I saw”, but now describes a sign, a great sign, and he will use it six more times in chapters 12-22.
 - (3) Great size is indicated since the woman has the moon under her feet.
 - ii) ouranō is the Greek word and is used of either the physical heaven (sky) which we can see or spiritual heaven which we cannot yet see.
 - (1) Context here is of things we can see.
 - (2) 2 Cor. 12:2 is certainly of things we cannot see, but the Greek word is the same.



- (3)
- c) a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. (12:1)
- i) The sun is used of God and representatives of God, as well as Jesus.
- (1) Psalm 84:11 - For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.
- (2) Rev. 1:16 - In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.
- (3) Rev 10:1 - Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.
- ii) The moon reflects the light of the sun. The idea here may be scale – she is far above the earth.
- iii) Crown is the crown of victory – stephanos.
- iv) Twelve stars contains the idea of completeness: as in 12 tribes, 12 apostles.
- (1) Complete victory.
- v) Who is this woman?
- (1) May have dual identities
- (a) Rev. 12:17 - the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
- (i) This indicates the woman is the church.
- (b) Rev. 12:5 - She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,
- (i) This indicates the woman gave birth to Jesus.
- (ii) Such is a long-held and continuing Catholic tradition.

- (iii) However, the church did not bring forth Jesus – Jesus brought forth the church.
 - (2) There is another sense in which the church, as did all of God’s people, brought about the birth of Jesus because of the need for a Savior.
 - (a) This view seems to encompass all of what we read of the woman
 - (i) Jesus was born of a virgin because of universal need.
 - (ii) Her offspring keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
- d) She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. (12:2)
 - i) Rev. 12:5 - 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.
 - ii) The son to whom she gave birth is described very concisely as Jesus.
 - (1) Psalm 2:9 - Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
 - (2) Rev. 2:27 - and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father:
 - (3) Rev. 19:15 - And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty.
 - (4) Eph. 1:20 - which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly *places*,
 - (5) Col. 3:1 – If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.
 - (6) Heb. 12:2 – looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
 - (7) 1 Pet. 3:22 - who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.
- e) And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. (12:3)



- i)
- ii) Hydra (or the Hydra) is a beast of Greek and Roman mythology, with similar mythology among the Sumerians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. The myth is that if you cut off one head, two more would grow in its place. Its weakness was that it had to retain at least one head to remain invulnerable.
 - (1) The Hydra was hard to defeat, but the mythological story has Heracles, son of Hera, finally defeating it.
 - (2) An aspect of the multiple heads was that there could be no secrets – Hydra would see and hear all that was going on.
- iii) The Hydra is a myth, but this dragon, also called a serpent, is not a myth.
 - (1) Rev. 12:9 - 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.
- iv) Seven heads – kings, seats of power.
 - (1) In Chapter 13, John will describe for us a beast with seven heads and ten horns who received authority from the dragon.
 - (2) In Chapter 17, John will be told that the seven heads are seven kings.
- v) Ten horns – kings, emblems of power, perhaps combined as one entity.
 - (1) Dan. 7:7, 20-27
 - (a) 7:7 After this I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.
 - (b) 7:20 and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, and before which three fell, even that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake great things, whose look

was more stout than its fellows. 21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And **as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise:** and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings. 25 And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. 26 But the judgment shall be set, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 27 And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

(2) Rev 17:12-13

(a) 12 And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. 13 These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast.

vi) Seven diadems – diademata – the royal crown of rulers, whether heavenly or earthly.

(1) Rev. 19:12 And his eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon his head *are* many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself.

(2) Jesus wore many diadems, as one who rules universally, the ruler of kings.

f) And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of 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. (12:4)

i) Third part of the stars

(1) Power is indicated in the ability to sweep away stars, but it is limited power.

(2) Dan. 8:9-10

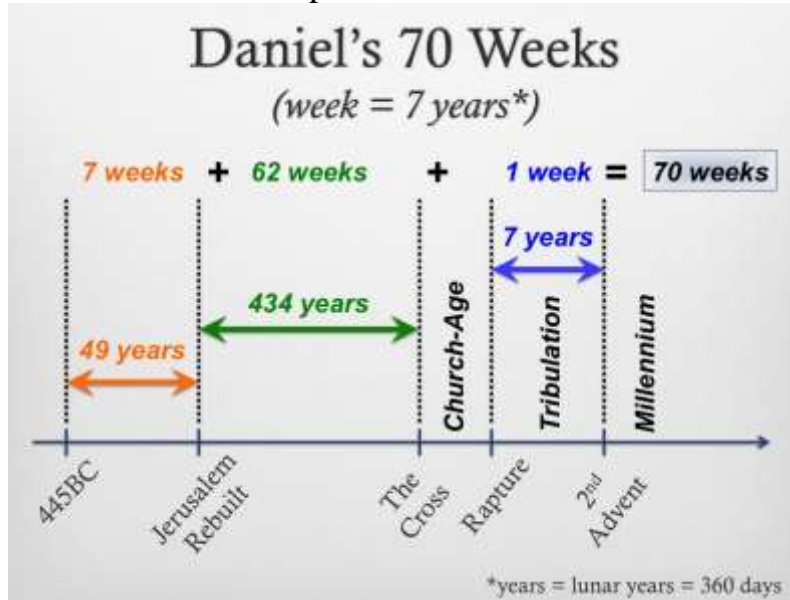
(a) 9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward

the glorious *land*. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them.

- (3) Stars are use symbolically to represent kings, dominions, or rulers.
 - (a) The power of the dragon influenced a large part (one-third) of the earth, but it is limited power.
- ii) The dragon is positioned to devour her child
 - (1) Exodus 1:15-22 - and he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birth-stool; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.
 - (a) Pharaoh ordered it because of his fear that the Israelites would become more powerful than the Egyptians.
 - (2) Matt. 2:16 - Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men.
 - (a) Herod ordered it because he wanted to eliminate rivals to his power.
 - (3) Gen. 3:15 - and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
 - (a) Satan knows, and it had been prophesied, that he would be dealt a mortal blow by the child.
- g) She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, (12:5)
 - i) See notes for verses 1 & 2.
 - ii) Rev. 12:12 - 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.
 - (1) Satan knows
 - (a) that he would lose when Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven
 - (b) that his time is short.
 - iii) Jesus was tempted by Satan at the beginning of his ministry (Matt. 4).
 - iv) Jesus continued to be tempted throughout his time on earth (Matt. 16:21-23).
 - v) When Jesus was crucified, it seem that Satan had defeated him.
 - vi) But Jesus rose victorious from the dead and ascended to heaven.
 - (1) This is the first loss for Satan.

- h) 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. (12:6)
- i) The woman – God’s people, Christians
 - ii) The wilderness – (literally) an *uncultivated, unpopulated* place; a *desolate* (deserted) area; (figuratively) a barren, solitary place that also provides *needed quiet* (freedom from disturbance).
 - iii) A place prepared of God – God has prepared protection for his people.
 - (1) Rev. 11:1 - Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,
 - (a) Measured for protection
 - (b) Rev. 7:3 - “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”
 - (c) Rev. 9:4 - They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.
 - (2) Mark 1:35, Luke 4:40-42
 - iv) That there they may nourish her –
 - (1) “They” is not specified – we may assume that in the same way that God prepared a place, he prepared those who were to nourish God’s people.
 - (a) Not much speculation to be found on “they”.
 - (2) Matt. 4:11 - Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.
 - (3) Rev. 12:14 - But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.
 - v) a thousand two hundred and threescore days
 - (1) 1,260 days = 42 months = 3-1/2 years
 - (a) A broken 7
 - (b) A temporary state of affairs, usually of trial, hardship, and testing.
 - (c) In this case, protection from the serpent and protection in a place prepared by God.
 - (2) The continuous-history approach uses the day-year interpretation to make it 1,260 years
 - (a) Measured from near the end of the 3rd century when apostasy began to fully blossom in the Roman church
 - (b) To the early 16th century (1500’s) when reformers began to rebel against the Roman church.

- (c) The church was miraculously preserved throughout the apostasy until reformers began their work.
- (3) The futurist/premillennialist approach, without giving a huge amount of detail, would probably place this in the theory of rapture from tribulation in their interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27.



(a)

2) The Dragon is Thrown Down from Heaven (12:7-9)

- a) **7** Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, **8** but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
- i) It appears that Satan, having lost in his attempt to destroy the child on earth, now invades heaven to try destroy the Christ.
- ii) But Michael and his angel defeated Satan, and Satan was thrown down to the earth.
- (1) Daniel 10:10-21 - **13** The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia,
- (a) Daniel 9:21 - while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.
- (2) Daniel 12:1-13 - **1** “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that

time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

(3) Jude 1:9 - But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

(4) From these verses we see Michael opposing Satan on several occasions.

(a) Heb. 1:13-14 - **13** And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? **14** Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

(b) Luke 10:17-18 - **17** The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” **18** And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

(5) On this occasion, Michael is victorious over Satan again.

(a) This is the second loss for Satan.

(6) This scene should be interpreted in its context in Revelation.

(a) Milton’s “Paradise Lost” uses a story, which draws ideas from Revelation 12, to portray the history of the devil and his fall.

(b) In this scene is pictured Satan’s efforts to destroy Christ and his people – it is not intended to portray Satan falling from heaven.

3) **The Voice from Heaven (12:10-12)**

a) **10** And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. **11** And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. **12** Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

i) Following the second defeat of Satan, loud praise is heard in heaven.

ii) The accuser

(1) Job 1:6-12 - **10** Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. **11** But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.”

(2) Job 2:1-6 - **4** Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. **5** But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.”

- (3) Zechariah 3:1-2 - [1](#) Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. [2](#) And the Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?”
- (4) 1 Chronicles 21:1-17 - Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.
- iii) Before God
- (1) Whether literal or figuratively, Satan has been accusing the brethren before God.
- (2) Job 1:6, 2:1 – [1:6](#) Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. [2:1](#) [1](#) Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.
- iv) Conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony
- (1) At the resurrection, Jesus bruised Satan’s head.
- (a) Genesis 3:15 - I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
- (b) Romans 16:20 - The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
- v) woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”
- (1) The devil was thrown down to earth.
- (a) Ephesians 2:1-3 - [1](#) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2](#) in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3](#) among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
- (2) He is angry.
- (a) 1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- (3) He knows his time is short.
- (a) Matthew 8:29 - And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”

4) The Dragon at War with the Woman (12:13-17)

- a) **13** And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. **14** But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. **15** The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. **16** But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. **17** Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.
- b) Having been twice defeated, Satan begins a third campaign.
- i) The child is safe, so Satan pursues the woman who gave birth to him.
 - ii) But the woman has fled to a place prepared by God (Rev. 12:6).
 - iii) Isaiah 51:9-10
 - iv) And she is given the two wings of a great eagle
 - (1) Exodus 19:4 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.
 - (2) Psalm 78:51-52 - He struck down every firstborn in Egypt, the firstfruits of their strength in the tents of Ham. **52** Then he led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
- c) The woman is helped by the earth.
- i) Satan had poured water like a river from his mouth.
 - (1) Not a literal flood, but a stream of trials and persecutions.
 - ii) The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the water.
 - (1) This is symbolic – Satan's schemes have failed again.
 - iii) This is Satan's third loss.
- d) Satan begins a fourth campaign, targeting her offspring, God's people, those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
- e) He stood on the sand of the sea.
- i) As if to summon help, which came forth from the sea in the form of a beast.