

1. Last week I completed a study of Revelation Chapter eleven. We are now ready to begin an analysis of Revelation Chapter twelve.
2. Before continuing, I want to provide “1Jo 1:9 time” as may be necessary.
3. The first “half” of the book of the Revelation is closed.
4. We have just completed a description of the Tribulation and the Second Coming in chapters 6-11.
5. We had a warning that the seven vials will be more disastrous than even the seals and trumpets already described.
6. The second half of the Book of the Revelation is about to unfold beginning with chapter twelve. In chapter 19 the Second Coming will be described in great detail.
7. We have arrived at the end of a major point in our simplified outline of the Book of The Revelation:
 - I. Rev Chapter One -- Introduction
 - II. Rev Chapter Two-Three -- The Churches of Asia/Church Age Periods
 - III. Rev Chapter Four-Five -- Scenes in Heaven
 - IV. Rev Chapter Six-Eleven -- Tribulation (with emphasis on the Events)
 - V. Rev Chapter Twelve-Nineteen -- Tribulation (with emphasis on the Characters)
 - VI. Rev Chapter-Twenty -- The Millennium and Last Judgment
 - VII. Rev Chapter 21:1-8 -- The Eternal State
 - VIII. Rev Chapter 21:9-22:5 -- The Eternal Jerusalem
 - IX. Rev Chapter 22:6-21 --The Last Message and Last Promise
8. Before continuing our study I want to provide an outline of Revelation 12 through chapter 20:
 - I. The Fall of Satan and The Armageddon Motivation -- Chapter twelve.
 - II. The False Prophet and The Antichrist are Introduced and Described -- Chapter thirteen.

III. The Principle of Grace before Judgment -- Chapter fourteen.

A. The 144,000 are seen again with our Lord; the fruit of their labor is seen in heaven.

B. The Big Bird takes a victory lap.

C. Babylon's fall is foretold.

D. A vision of Armageddon is provided.

IV. Heaven Anticipates with Joy the Coming Seven Vial Judgments -- Chapter fifteen.

V. The Seven Bowls or Vials are Poured Out -- Chapters 15 and 16.

A. The Bowls or Vials are introduced -- Rev 15:1-8

B. The seven Bowls or Vials are described.

1. The First Bowl -- Rev 16:1-2

2. The Second Bowl -- Rev 16:3

3. The Third Bowl -- Rev 16:4-7

4. The Fourth Bowl -- Rev 16:8-9

5. The Fifth Bowl -- Rev 16:10-11

6. The Sixth Bowl -- Rev 16:12

7. The Seventh Bowl -- Rev 16:17-21

VI. The Doom of The Whore Church -- Chapter seventeen

VII. The World System of Rome is Destroyed -- Chapter eighteen

VIII. The Second Advent of Christ with emphasis on Him -- Chapter nineteen

IX. The Final Judgment -- Chapter twenty

8. Let me quote again from John Walvoord:

"Before the details of the judgment to follow are unfolded in the seven vials in chapter sixteen, the divine revelation turns to other important aspects which relate to this period and which chronologically precede the consummation. Apart from the outpourings of the vials, which occur in rapid succession, there is little chronological movement from this point until chapter 19 and the second coming of Christ.

“Events and situations are now introduced which are concurrent with the seals and the trumpets. These serve to emphasize the dramatic climax of this period in the Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

9. Now I want to give you my expanded translation of Rev 11:18-19: the last two verses of chapter eleven.

Expanded Translation

Rev 11:18 The nations were angry for they could see and anticipate that the wrath of God was about to descend from heaven. The time had come for God to judge the devil's world and those of the Tribulation who had rejected His salvation plan. It was also a time for rewarding His Tribulation and Old Testament saints. Both the small and the great of planet earth were about to be brought to task because they followed the Antichrist in his destructive plan for the planet.

Rev 11:19 Then I looked up where I could clearly see God's temple in heaven open up, and within His great Temple was the Ark of the Covenant. From out of the Temple came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm. Planet earth was under attack for the King was indeed about to come.

10. Now we are ready for the exegesis of Chapter Twelve:

Introduction

1. Chapter twelve deals with the important characters of the period, chapter thirteen with the wicked rulers of the period, and chapter fourteen through nineteen with the ultimate triumph of Christ.

2. This material covered in chapters twelve through nineteen will not necessarily be chronological.

3. In chapters 12 through 14 of the Book of the Revelation, the great actors of that time are introduced.

4. There are seven such characters:

4.1 the woman, representing Israel,

4.2 the dragon, representing Satan,

4.3 the man child, referring to Christ,

4.4 Michael, representing himself and his angelic army,

4.5 Israel, the remnant of the seed of the woman,

4.6 the beast out of the sea, referring to the Antichrist as the world dictator,

4.7 the beast out of the earth, referring to the False Prophet as the religious leader of the world.

5. Around these main characters swirls the moving scene of the Tribulation.

6. First to be introduced and of prime importance as a key to the whole situation is the woman representing Israel. Before moving forward let's take a quick look at Revelation chapter twelve with brief annotated comment:

NIV

Rev 12:1 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman [Israel] clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars [twelve tribes] on her head.

Rev 12:2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth [a reference to the birth of Christ].

Rev 12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon [Satan and his empire] with seven heads [seven hills of Rome] and ten horns [original ten nation federation] and seven crowns [the ten become seven] on his head [a description of his ultimate international eschatological form]. *See Dan 7:7, 20-24 Infra pages 14-15*

Rev 12:4 His tail swept a third of the stars [fallen angels - original fall] out of heaven and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. [Herod the Great's action]

Rev 12:5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. [at the 2nd Advent] And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. [the ascension]

Rev 12:6 The woman fled into the desert [dual application: Egypt and protection by certain nations of the Tribulation] to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be protected for 1,260 days. [the Great Tribulation]

Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

Rev 12:8 But the devil and his demons were not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

Rev 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. [middle of the Tribulation]

Rev 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."

Rev 12:11 They [believers] overcame him [Antichrist] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Rev 12:12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short. [the last 42 months of Tribulation]

Rev 12:13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman [Israel of the Tribulation] who had given birth to the male child.

Rev 12:14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time [last 3 & 1/2 years], out of the serpent's reach. [an apparent reference to the Gentiles of the Tribulation who protect Israel]

Rev 12:15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river [total devastation], to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.

Rev 12:16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. [the many places in and around the Holy Land where Jews can find refuge; an additional reference to the gentile nations who help Israel]

Rev 12:17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman [believing Israel of the Tribulation] and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—the residue who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

7. Now let's get specific as we begin with verses one and two of chapter twelve:

KJV

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.

Principles:

1. The first of the seven personages to be introduced in this section is described as a great wonder in heaven, or, better translated, a great "Sign" in heaven from the Greek noun **Semeion**.

2. Though what John beholds excites his wonder, he does not use the Greek word for wonder (**Teras**). John instead uses the word **Semeion**; a word meaning sign.

3. The main point is that it is a sign or symbol of importance rather than merely a wonder. Subsequently, six other signs or miracles are mentioned.

Rev 12:3 And there appeared another "sign" in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

Rev 13:13 And he (the False Prophet) doeth great "signs", so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Rev 13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those "signs" which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Rev 15:1 And I saw another "sign" in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Rev 16:14 For they [sixth vial] are the spirits of devils, working "signs", which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Rev 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought "signs" before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

4. This sign in verse one is distinguished by being called "great." Though the sign is seen in heaven, it apparently portrays a reality on the earth, for subsequently the woman pictured is persecuted by Satan in the tribulation.

5. The woman is described as clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

6. Further, she is with child and waiting the imminent birth of her son.

7. There are many explanations for the identity of the woman.

7.1 No doubt the best is that she represents Israel as the matrix or national "womb" from which Christ came.

8. By contrast, other representative women are mentioned in the Apocalypse such as **Jezebel** (Rev 2:20), who represents false religion as a system;

Rev 2:20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You [Thyatira 800-1517] tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess ... she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

8.1 the **harlot** (see Rev 17:1-7, 15-18), the apostate church of the future;

Rev 17:1 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters.

Rev 17:2 With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."

Rev 17:3 Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.

Rev 17:4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.

Rev 17:5 This title was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Rev 17:6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.

Rev 17:7 Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns ...

Rev 17:15 Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.

Rev 17:16 The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

Rev 17:17 For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.

8.2 and lastly the **bride**, the Lamb's wife (Rev 19:7) and the church joined to Christ in glory.

Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

9. In the Old Testament, Israel frequently is presented as the wife of Jehovah, often in her character as being unfaithful to her husband. Here in Rev 12:1-2 is the godly remnant of Israel standing true to God in the time of the great tribulation.

10. The description of the woman as clothed with the sun and the moon is apparently an allusion to Gen 37:9-11, where these heavenly bodies represent Israel's rulership and the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Gen 37:9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

Gen 37:10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?"

11. John Walvoord has concluded "The symbolism may extend beyond this to represent in some sense the glory of Israel and her ultimate triumph over her enemies."

12. This identification of the woman as Israel seems to be supported by the evidence from this chapter. Israel is obviously the source from which have come many of the blessings of God including the Bible, Christ, and the Apostles.

13. The twelve stars would certainly seem to refer to the twelve tribes.

13.1 The persecution of the woman coincides with the persecution of Israel.

14. The woman as the nation of Israel is seen travailing in birth and awaiting delivery of her child. Frequently in Scripture the nation Israel is pictured in the tribulation time as going through great trial and affliction.

15. Though, historically, the nation gave birth to Christ through the Virgin Mary, the implication of verse 2 is that the references are to the sufferings of Israel as a nation rather than to the historic birth of Christ.

16. It may also refer to the sufferings of the nation in general over its entire troublesome history.

16.1 Strictly interpreted, this difficult birth may signify the travail of Israel at the time of the first coming of Christ as borne out by verses three and four. Before moving forward in our study, let me give you an expanded translation of Rev 12:1-2.

Expanded Translation

Rev 12:1 I then saw an exciting and wondrous scene in heaven; it was obviously a sign: there I could see a woman representing Israel; she was clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head; these things representing the twelve tribes who will ultimately rule.

Rev 12:2 The woman Israel was pregnant; she cried out in pain as she was about to give birth to the Lord Jesus Christ.

17. Now for an analysis of verses three and four.

KJV

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.

1. The second great sign appearing in heaven is described as a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads.

2. From the similar description given in Rev 13:1 and the parallel references in Daniel Chapters two and seven, it is clear that the revived Roman Empire is in view as the last of some five listed Gentile world empires in prophecy. First a helpful chronology chart:

HELPFUL CHRONOLOGIES

625 B.C.	Babylonia established as power by Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, an Assyrian
612 B.C.	Babylon (under Nebuchadnezzar) defeats Egypt and Assyria at Carchemish
606 B.C.	Judah is defeated by Babylon, two major deportations follow in 597 and 586 when the Temple and city are destroyed
539 B.C.	Cyrus conquers Babylon (the end of the Babylonian Empire)
538 B.C.	Edict of Cyrus the Great permits Jewish repatriation of Judah
536 B.C.	Return of 49,897 Jews to the land, book of Daniel written Daniel dies soon thereafter
334 B.C.	Alexander begins his conquest of Persia
323 B.C.	Alexander's conquest is complete-Alexander dies
323-147 B.C.	Hellenistic Empires (Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus)
200 B.C.-476	Roman Empire
Tribulation	Revived Roman Empire established

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