



The War in Heaven & on Earth

Revelation 12

Revelation 12:1-6 (Birth of the Male Child)

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.

A woman:

- Clothed with the sun
- Moon under her feet
- Crown of 12 stars
- Pregnant and in agony of giving birth

A dragon:

- Great, red, dragon
- Seven heads
- Ten horns
- Seven diadems
- Tail swept down $\frac{1}{3}$ of the stars of heaven
- Seeking to devote the child to be born of the woman

Revelation 12:1-6 (cont.)

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.

Child of the woman:

- Ruler of all the nations
- Rule with a rod of iron
- But caught up to God and to God's throne

Woman:

- Fled into the wilderness
- Safe in the hands of God
- Nourished for 1260 days (3 ½ years). This time of tribulation.

Starting with what we know...

1. The child of the woman is Jesus Christ. He is the ruler of all the nations who is now with the Father (Psalm 2:9; Rev 19:15).
2. The woman is Israel with the 12 tribes adorning her crown (Gen 37:9).
3. The great dragon is Satan. He is that ancient serpent (dragon) from Genesis 3 (cf. v. 9).
4. The seven heads, ten horns, and seven diadems could be a reference to the beast in Revelation 13:1. They do speak of authority, military might, and political power.
5. The third of the stars of heaven are likely fallen angels who join Satan in his rebellion (cf. v. 9).

#1. Psalm 2:7-9, "7

I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

8

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

9

You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Revelation 19:15, "From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty."

#2. Genesis 37:9, "Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

#3. Revelation 12:9, "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.”

How do we know these symbols? They come from the word of God. Scripture interprets Scripture.

From symbols to interpretation...

1. The identify of the symbols places Revelation 12:1-6 at Christ's first advent, not his second. That is, it describes past events.
2. The vision describes the people of Israel longing for the Messiah (cf. Gen 3:15).
3. The devil sought to destroy Christ (through Herod and killing the newborns) and throughout his ministry. Yet Christ was victorious and has been exalted.
4. The woman fleeing into the wilderness likely describes the righteous Jews, waiting for the Messiah, protected by God and from his wrath.

#1. Some do interpret this as referring to the future coming of Jesus Christ. This is describing tribulation events with a revived Roman empire. The woman is said to be future Israel, or at least the events of the rest of the chapter jump forward from Christ's first advent until the second.

#3. The text jumps over Christ's ministry and jumps right to his ascension and enthronement.

#4. This is consistent with the 144,000 from Revelation 7. True Israel, marked, sealed, and delivered.

If the 1260 days is a reference to the Jewish Wars, this is the Jewish Christians who escaped Jerusalem and fled to Pella (the mountainous region to the north), heeding Jesus' words to flee to the mountains. This was God's protection.

Revelation 12:7-12 (War in Heaven)

⁷Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

⁹And 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.

Revelation 12:7-12 (War in Heaven)

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!”

Satan Cast Out of Heaven

1. Satan and his angels are cast out. Meaning they can no longer accuse believers before God (v. 10).
2. The basis for this is the salvation, power, kingdom, and authority of Christ has come (v. 10).
3. The brothers conquer the dragon because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (v. 11).
4. While the devil can no longer accuse the brothers before God, he still seeks to wage war on the earth (v. 12).

#3. Michael cast him out. Christ's authority cast him out. The brothers conquered him. All of it is on account of the blood of the Lamb (the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ).

"Word of their testimony" is gospel preaching. That's how Satan is conquered. The gospel and its preaching.

Transition: The question is when do these events take place?

When Is Satan Cast Out?

1. Revelation 12:1-6 describes the birth, ministry, and exaltation of Jesus.
2. Revelation 12:14 describes how Satan takes out his wrath on the same woman mentioned in vv. 1-6 and does so for “times, time, and half a time.” This is the same period mentioned in 12:6.
3. Satan is overcome in the ministry of Jesus and defeated through his work on the cross (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15).
4. Salvation, power, the kingdom, and authority have come in Jesus’ ministry (Matt 28:19, Rev 5:9).
5. Satan’s role as accuser in heaven is no more (Rom 8:33-39).

#3 Colossians 2:15, “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

Hebrews 2:14-15, “**14** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

#3. Satan could be called the ruler of this world before the coming of Christ. In the temptation in the wilderness, he tempted Christ with the kingdoms of this world that he could have apart from his death if he would worship the devil. Jesus has claim to those kingdoms through his death on the cross.

#5. **33** Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. **34** Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? **36** As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved

us. **38** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THEREFORE, Satan is “cast out of heaven” during the ministry of Jesus.

He has bound the strong man. He saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning (Luke 10). He came to overcome the devil (1 John 3:8, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”).

This is when the Kingdom is inaugurated. This is when the enemies begin to be placed under his feet.

Revelation 12:13-17 (The Woman Preserved)

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.

Revelation 12:13-17 (cont.)

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.

The Woman Preserved

1. The woman (cf. vv. 1-6) likely refers to the Jews who anticipated the Messiah and embraced his coming. They are referred to as the 144,000 elsewhere in Revelation. They are sealed and protected.
2. The 144,000 fled into the wilderness for this time of great tribulation (time, times, and half a time OR 3 ½ years) (v. 14).
3. The devil did his best to destroy these followers of Christ but he was thwarted (vv. 15-16).
4. Jewish Christians fled Jerusalem and found refuge in the mountainous wilderness of Pella in 66AD (for 3 ½ years).

#2. The eagles wings are not American helicopters (Lindsey) but biblical language.

The dragon is cast down and is now called the serpent (slithers on his belly, stuck to the earth). So the people of God gain wings and fly to refuge, safe from the serpent.

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."

The Woman Preserved (cont.)

5. The escape of the “woman” is foretold by Christ in the Olivet Discourse (Luke 21:20-24).
6. Satan turned his attention to other believers in Christ spread throughout the empire (v. 17).

#5. **20** “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. **21** Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, **22** for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. **23** Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. **24** They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

#6. Early in the church’s history persecution was centered in Jerusalem. Remember Paul, he had relative freedom until Jews from Jerusalem began sounding the alarm. Others did not want him to go to Jerusalem because they would arrest him and kill him.

It was after 70AD that persecution began to come more from Rome than Jerusalem. These verses, describe that shift of the tactics of the devil.

Jay Adams says, “Failing in his purpose to destroy the “sealed ones” by the Jerusalem holocaust, he turns against “the remnant of her seed” (v. 17). This is the Gentile church, true spiritual Israel, the present seed of Abraham.”

Significance of Revelation 12

1. Describes the dawning of the church age with Satan defeated but dangerous.
2. Demonstrates that John's visions are not chronological yet still are related to the events of his day.
3. Christ's ministry was the definitive event in history.
4. We conquer because of Christ and through the gospel.
5. Satan's attacks are limited and temporary. God will preserve his people and his gospel will go forth.