

A STUDY OF REVELATION

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PART XVIII IMPORTANT PERSONAGES Revelation 12:1-17

Introduction: the relating of Chapter 12 is somewhat like that of Chapter 11. The witnesses are emphasized in Chapter 11 with the time covering the entire seven-year period. Then, the blowing of the seventh trumpet brings us again to the point of the visible, bodily return of Christ.

Now, Chapter 12 turns to emphasize important personages of principle characters in the last days with the element of time not being of primary consideration. Again, the forces at work in heaven and in earth culminate in Armageddon and the return of Jesus. This is the effect. The relating of these personages shows some causes of the effect.

I. THE WOMAN, V. 1-2.

- A. This was shown to John as a great wonder in heaven.
- B. The woman described:
 - 1. Clothed with the sun.
 - 2. Moon under her feet.
 - 3. A crown of 12 stars upon her head.
 - 4. She cried in travail to be delivered of a child.
- C. General Comments.
 - 1. The woman is, beyond doubt, a symbol of Israel.
 - 2. The sun is great light signifying the light of God in Christ.
 - 3. The moon is lesser light signifying the church which had its beginning in her.
 - 4. The crown of twelve stars refers to the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - 5. The travail in birth refers to the birth of Jesus.

II. THE DRAGON, V. 3-4.

- A. It appears as another wonder in heaven.
- B. The dragon described:
 - 1. A great red dragon.
 - 2. It has seven heads.
 - 3. It has ten horns.
 - 4. It has seven crowns upon its heads.
 - 5. Its tail draws a third of the stars of heaven to the earth.
 - 6. It stood before the woman to devour her child at birth.
- C. General Comments.
 - 1. The great red dragon is identified as Satan.
 - 2. The seven heads may be the complete god-ship of Satan on earth.
 - 3. The ten horns are probably the political powers of governments he will control in the last days.
 - 4. Crowns on his heads imply he is indeed the supreme spiritual head of men apart from God.
 - 5. Its tail drawing a third of the angels to earth speaks

of the original rebellion of Lucifer and the necessity for angelic choice in heaven.

6. The dragon standing ready to devour the child of the woman needs little explanation. This was the occasion of the slaughter of the innocents under Herod.

III. THE CHILD, V. 5-6.

- A. The woman gave birth to a man child.
- B. The child described.
 1. He is to rule all nations with a rod of iron.
 2. He was caught up unto God and to His throne.
- C. The woman's safety.
 1. She fled into the wilderness to a prepared place.
 2. She is cared for there a thousand two hundred threescore days.
- D. General Comments
 1. The man child is the Lord Jesus.
 2. His ruler-ship is destined for the millennial reign.
 3. His being caught up is His ascension, Acts 1:11.
 4. The fleeing of the woman to safety appears to jump in time from the birth of Christ to the yet future date.

IV. THE ARCHANGEL, V. 7-12.

- A. The archangel, Michael, and his angels war with the dragon and his angels.
 1. Michael won the battle.
 2. The dragon and his angels were cast out.
 3. They were cast to the earth.
- B. Michael's victory occasioned a heavenly announcement.
 1. Salvation, strength, the kingdom of our God, the power of His Christ is come.
 2. The accuser of the brethren is cast down.
 3. The method the brethren used to overcome the accuser.
 - a. The blood of the Lamb.
 - b. The word of their testimony.
 - c. Their willingness to not prefer life over death.
 4. The heavens are to rejoice.
 5. But woe to earth inhabitants.
 - a. Because the devil is cast out in wrath.
 - b. Because he knows his time is short.
- C. General Comments.
 1. The angelic war is viewed both historically and prophetically.
 - a. Historically as a reality of millenniums gone by.
 - b. Prophetically as a last and ultimate rejection.
 2. The heavenly announcement needs no explanation.

V. RESULTANT SATANIC FURY ON EARTH, V. 13-16.

- A. The dragon turns to greatly persecute the woman.
- B. The woman is given two wings of a great eagle.
 1. She is enabled to fly into the wilderness.
 2. She is nourished for a time, times and half a time.

- C. The serpent cast a flood of water from his mouth after the woman.
 - 1. This is designed to destroy the woman.
 - 2. The earth aids the woman by swallowing up the flood.
- D. General Comments.
 - 1. The persecution of the woman is evidently that of the last half of Daniel's seventieth week.
 - 2. She is helped by some means to escape Satan's attempt to destroy her.
 - 3. The flood of water continues figurative language indicating Satanic attempts to destroy Israel, but she is aided by providential events.

VI. THE REMNANT, V. 17.

- A. The dragon who was wroth with the woman went to make war with the remnant of her seed.
 - 1. These have the commandments of God.
 - 2. They have the testimony of Jesus Christ.
- B. If one becomes attached to the idea of narrative and time sequence here then he encounters great interpretation problems.
- C. On the other hand, forgetting time, the only people on earth clearly shown to have the commandments of God and testimony of Jesus Christ for the last near two thousand years is the church. I believe this is what is meant in verse 17. The church has undergone sevier persecution from the dragon.