The woman, the dragon, and the child

Rev. 12

*V. 1-6 – The Woman giving birth. The child conquering the dragon.*

*V. 7-12 – The war in heaven.*

*V. 13-17 – The dragon fighting the woman and her children. Heaven's view of the war continued on earth.*

We have finished the big book; the first half of the letter of Revelation to John. It focused on the work of Christ fulfilling God's plan of redemption. In chapters 4-5, John saw the throne room of heaven and the angel showed to John the lamb of God, Christ, taking on the work of opening the scroll that no one else could. The angel showed to John the warnings and announcements of tribulations and judgment that would come to earth from heaven.

Now we turn to the little book; the second half of the letter. We will find that it contains the story of the gospel and of the church universal still on earth who's goal is to share that gospel, despite persecution from the Devil. And once again, the visions begin with a narrative. This particular story seems to be looking from heaven to see what happens on earth. A recapitulation of the gospel story from a different place and view.

And as we know, history repeats itself. There will always be people who yield themselves to sin (Rom. 6:16). God's people will always have a remnant who are obedient. It will always stand because God's protects his word and his people (Rev. 12:17).

1. Man's disobedience > God's judgment > Man's response (obedience or continued disobedience)
2. Man's obedience > Satan's persecution > Man's response (")

These two situations will always be in existence while time exists. Revelation 12 shows to us that it is truly a continuous war involving every living creature until the end of time. So it's important for us to pay attention to what it says, and pass that message along.

John is now shown signs:

**Rev. 12:1-2**

1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. 2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

**V. 1-6**

V. 1

There is a great sign in heaven. A woman dressed with the radiance of all the lights of the heavens. The brilliance of righteous saints throughout the ages. She is God's collective people.

The garland of twelve stars should remind us of religion itself; of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles.

v. 2

She cries out in labor pains, ready to give birth to the child. God's people were oppressed. They desired a savior. (400 yrs)

**Rev. 12:3-4**
3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

V. 3

This second sign, is a great, fiery red dragon. Shimmering from the power of death itself.

With 7 heads he has complete power over this world. He is conniving, crafty, deceitful. As if we conquer one head and another comes from a different direction.

On those 7 heads he had 10 horns. Horns being a tool or weapon of sorts. The devil frequently used tools in his craft. This specifically would be those they oppressed into service.

He has 7 crowns having complete power over the world. But again that is permitted by God, who controls all things, even the angels. E.g. Rome had seven hills it was build on, it was the seat of the Roman emperors and later the Popes. He used the emperors to stamp out Christianity, then when that failed he used the popes to deceive the world into combing Christianity with pagan practices.

v. 4

His strong tail drew 1/3 of the stars to earth. Perhaps he convinced a third of the angels of heaven to follow him in his disobedience to God. And they are cast to earth to help him in his diabolical schemes.

And so he stands before the woman ready to harm her child when he is born. He tries to catch him when he is young and defenseless. Like influencing Herod killing all the babies in Bethlehem. He was going to get that child one way or another. He spent the entire time Jesus was on earth trying to get him to do something wrong or capture him to dispose of him. He was ready.

**Rev. 12:5-6**
5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

V. 5

The male child is born. The devil is ready for him, but he is a powerful being and is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Israel desired a savior, and they received THE savior. That child is the Christ.

We read in many places that Christ overcame the devil. The temptations in the wilderness, the Jewish political parties constantly harassing him, and the Romans torturing him. Jesus certainly got worn out while on earth, but his mission came first.

After Satan struck the heel by killing Jesus physically, because he was that pure sacrificial lamb, he resurrected on that third day. He showed himself to the brethren for 40 days, then ascended to heaven. He was caught up to God and took his place on his throne. He now rules all nations as King of kings, and Lord of lords. (Rev. 11:15) At his discretion are nations raised and brought low.

Rev. 2:27 states if we overcome the world, we share in that power. Not in a physical sense, but a spiritual. As Christians we are raised to sit in heavenly places with Christ (Eph. 2:6). We are raised above the power of the nations of this world. That the evil they possess can be smashed by truth.

v. 6

And the woman fled into the wilderness, to a place prepared by God for her for 1260 days. This is the tribulation period, the Christian age. While the two witnesses [prophets] finish their work and are killed (Ch. 11), the woman, God's collective people flee to the wilderness.

This is an interesting symbol having a dual purpose. All the people of God make up the woman, and the woman is protected by God in a spiritual sense (Rom. 8:29-30, Matt. 16:18). God has protected the way to heaven. No one can take our salvation. And yet, we as Christian's are considered her offspring as individuals. Only we as individuals can lose our eternal salvation if we give up being Christians or give in to sin (What we yield to. Rom. 6). So God fulfills his promise in protecting the church.

**Revelation 12:7-12**
7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

**V. 7-12**

v. 7

War begins in heaven. Michael and his angels fought the dragon and his angels. This seems to be a spiritual war, since angels don't physically die; they don't have physical bodies like we do.

Angels are created being. When were angels created? In Job 38:4-7, God calls the angels "the sons of God." The sons of God shouted for joy when God laid the foundation of earth. They were created before earth.

God created the heavens and their hosts (Ps. 148:1-5, 33:6, Col. 1:16).

**Neh. 9:6**
You alone are the Lord;
You have made heaven,
The heaven of heavens, with all their host,
The earth and everything on it,
The seas and all that is in them,
And You preserve them all.
The host of heaven worships You.

In Gen. 32:1-2, tells us that Jacob met some angels. He said, "This is God's host." (KJV)

One of these angels was the devil. We don't know his original name. But Ezekiel writes that Satan was a bright angel who sinned because he was lifted up by pride.

**Ezek. 28:12-19**
“You were the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
13 You were in Eden, the garden of God;
Every precious stone was your covering:
...
The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes
Was prepared for you on the day you were created.
14 “You were the anointed cherub who covers;
I established you;
You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.
15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created,
Till iniquity was found in you.
16 “By the abundance of your trading
You became filled with violence within,
And you sinned;
Therefore I cast you as a profane thing
Out of the mountain of God;
And I destroyed you, O covering cherub,
...
17 “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor;
I cast you to the ground,

That is why Paul states that an elder is not a novice, else being lifted up in pride (1 Tim. 3:6).

Rev. 12:9 says he had influenced other angels. (Jude 6)

2 Pet. 2:4 - "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned..."

Angels were under law. (1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:15; Ps. 103:20)

There was a testing time for the angels and there were those who disobeyed. There is no law of pardon for angels. There is no savior for them. The angels who sinned immediately sealed their fate, because they were in heaven and saw everything. They knew God. We live by faith, and have time to change.

In their sinful, lawless state, they choose to fight. We see a picture of them fighting in several places.

In Dan. 10, Michael stood beside kings. Satan was there tempting them.

Jude 9, Michael contended with the devil.

These fights are over God's people. Satan is, of course, the accuser of the brethren. We have two examples in Dan. 12 and Zech. 3:1-2. In Zech. 3:1-5, Michael is standing beside Joshua the high priest defending him. Satan is accusing Joshua of having filthy garments. Does the devil have a good point? All Michael could respond with was, "God rebuke you."

Satan even accused Job to God directly of being paid to serve him. If Job wasn't being paid he wouldn't be faithful. He accuses God of paying him, which then Job proves Satan wrong.

While the child is struggling on earth, the angels are fighting in heaven; disputing what is true about who should be saved.

Before the death of Jesus, and his resurrection, Satan was watching God. God was saving some men and sending everyone else to hell. (2 Pet. 2) *For example, all of the flood victims went to hell, but Noah and his family went to heaven. Later all of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed and went to hell, but Lot was saved and got to go to heaven. How were these men different? They were sinners just like everyone? Where is the justice here?* The angels of heaven were speechless. They knew God was just but didn't understand why God was doing this. This is why Peter writes:

**1 Pet. 1:12**
To them *[the prophets]* it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

The angels wanted to know what the prophets were revealing. They wanted an answer for the devil. So when Jesus died and became a substitute for us and resurrected, it became clear to the angels. He became our substitute and we get to be forgiven. We get to go to heaven, because we are now forgiven. That allowed God to be just and the justifier of those who believed in the Messiah.

**Rom. 3:23-26**
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, *[Satan's argument]* 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. *[Answer the angels waited for.]*

v. 8

The dragon and his angels lost not only the war but his place in heaven.

v. 9

They are cast to earth.

He is called a serpent reminding us of Gen. 3.

He is called the Devil, meaning a slanderer and accuser.

He is called Satan, meaning "adversary," related to a verb suggesting the idea of "lying in wait." The word was frequently used in the general sense of an adversary. In Num. 22:22 it is even applied to the messenger of God who opposed Balaam. The general usage is usually indicated by the absence of the definite article. With the use of the article, however, e.g., “the adversary,” it becomes a proper name.

He is called the one who deceives the whole world. Those are serious statements.

v. 10-12

After they are cast out of heaven, a choir sings praises to God: (A choir because they sing "out brethren")

*The kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ have come.*

*The accuser of our brethren has been cast down.*

This has been a war raging since Eden and intensified with the arrival of the child. Christ, the child, came to heaven. Certainly proving that God is not waiting for some millennial reign to fix his mistake of the church. The church was not a mistake, but the only way in the Christian age to get to heaven.

In this song, the scene is displayed more like a courtroom (10-12). It shows the war is a challenge of minds, not physical prowess. Christ overcame the accuser of the brethren. He proved what the devil was spouting was wrong, and the devil would no long be permitted to continue.

v. 11

The song continues by saying, the brethren overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. They loved Christ more than their lives.

Baptized for the remission of sins.

Admittance of faith. Preaching the gospel. A lifelong commitment.

They loved Christ more than their lives.

v. 12

Rejoice heavens.

Woe to earth. Earth and sea symbolic for mankind. In chapter 7, trees were also mentioned to represent the faithful.

It's because the devil has come to you in his wrath, knowing his time is short. He knows he's been caught.

**Rev. 12:13-17**
13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. 14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

**V. 13-17**

v. 13

After the dragon is cast to earth, he focuses on the woman. He plans to persecute her.

v. 14

But the woman is given two wings, where she flies to the wilderness. He can't persecute the church because he can't take salvation from the Church. The way to heaven is established and he can't change that. God protects his word.

She is nourished for a time, times, and half a time. The 1260 days (v. 6). It is the tribulation period, the Christian age.

v. 15

So the serpent spewed water from his mouth like a flood towards the woman, that she might be carried away. It seems as if he missed her once so he will cast a wider net. A flood to sweep the land. What does the devil spew? Only lies come from his mouth with which he accuses others with. Jesus explained to the Pharisees:

**John 8:44**
You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

1 John 2:16 is what I consider the devil's toolbox (Used on Eve in Eden, and Jesus in the wilderness.). These are lies.

*"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and [HIS PERSONAL FAVORITE] the pride of life."*

v. 16

The earth helped the woman and soaked up the water. Religion itself helped the woman. People the world over have enough of a sense of moral right and wrong that false doctrines don't last forever. They don't take over. If we were to look back through history, there would be more false religions that don't exist today than what does.

v. 17

The dragon is enraged that he can't attack the idea of the church. God has preserved it, though he continues to try. So he finally makes war with her children. We have seen this progression through the chapter where the devil focuses on the greatest target he can.

His plan originally was to devour the child, but Jesus overcame him being a perfect sacrifice that crushed the serpents head. So the devil focused on the woman while he could, but the truth of God's word has protected the church. Now he focuses on individual members. It is always who he is permitted to come after. Like recorded in Job 1-2, God permits who the devil can go after; who and how he can tempt. And tempt them he will.

These children are those "who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." These people are obedient to everything God has said to do, and continually spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

E.g., Acts 23:8 states that the Sadducees didn't believe in angels...Jesus condemned them for that belief. A lot of people today say there aren't angels, but they are representations of moral characteristics (Some people say that about God as well.). This chapter shows the devil is real, he is our adversary, and he is seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

**Closing**

Chapter 12 tells us some of the story of Christ unfolding as the angels learned it. It should give us hope that God protects his people, and fulfills his promises, but it also serves as a warning. It is specified that those who are saved keep God's commands, and they pass on the good news of Christ.

This behind the scenes look also tells us who to blame for our problems. It is the devil. Job blamed God because he didn't have this glimpse of heaven. So we know better.

**Job 4:17-19a**
17 ‘Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker?
18 If He puts no trust in His servants,
If He charges His angels with error,
19 How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,...

**2 Pet. 2:4, 9**
4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

...

He did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah and his family.

He did not spare Sodom and Gomorrah, but delivered righteous Lot.

...

9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

These things should motivate us to be godly.

If you're not a Christian, won't you consider becoming one; taking advantage of the blood of the lamb that was offered for us. If you believe, make the change to serve God, confess that belief to us and be baptized. (BRCB) (Rev. 1:5; 7:14) When we are baptized; translated into the kingdom of God, we have a new family of God, which includes the angels of God.

If you are a Christian, don't reject the greatest offer you'll ever receive. Don't trample the Son of God. (RCP)