



The Theological Center

"In turning to chapters 12–14 in the Revelation, one comes to the theological center of things. Indeed, here is the clear evidence that John's interest lies not with chronology as such; rather he is offering a prophetic/theological word of warning and encouragement to God's people at the turn of the first century because of what is about to happen to them. Here the interest is not at all with the question of when, but with the what, who, and why of the coming events."

Gordon Fee

Revelation 12:1-2

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.

A Great Sign

- A Woman...
 - Clothed with the _____
 - Moon under her _____
 - A _____ of twelve stars
- John uses astral imagery to show that the coming of the Messiah had _____ significance (Walter Elwell)
- Isaiah 66:7 - ⁷ "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son.

- Genesis 37:9 - 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."

Who is the Woman?

- Is this Mary?

"The woman represents a number of things, all blended together. She is Israel, from whom Jesus came; she is the church, as the people of God, persecuted by the dragon; she is Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus; she is woman, through whom all life comes, and generally, all the people of God. That all of this should be blended into one image is not at all unusual in apocalyptic symbolism."
 (Walter Elwell)

The woman represents **Israel**, as the chosen people of God from whom Jesus is born, and then the **church**, spiritual Israel, not Mary. (Robert Mounce)

- Israel is often portrayed as "_____ " in the OT, alluding to the coming Messiah
- "God has always seen his _____ collectively as sun-clothed and star crowned (Kendall Easley)

Revelation 12:3-4

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.

Another Sign

- A great red dragon
 - Seven _____
 - May be an allusion to Rome, the city of seven hills
 - Ten _____
 - Seven diadems (crowns)
- "The seven heads suggest complete wisdom; the seven crowns point to blasphemous kingly claims; the ten horns mean power" (Kendall Easley)
- A third of stars thrown down

The Dragon vs The Woman

- The dragon waits on the child to be born

"Throughout the ages, the drama God announced in Genesis 3:15 has been unfolding: "And I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." During the days of Jesus' earthly life, the devil's struggle to stamp him out is evident both through Herod's slaughter of the Bethlehem babies and the crucifixion."
Kendall Easley

Revelation 12:5-6

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.

Male Child

- The child was _____ to God... same verb as 1 Thesalonians 5:17
¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

- 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 12:7-8

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.

War!

- _____ leads heavenly angels against the dragon (Satan)
 - Daniel 12:1
 - Jude 9
- No longer any space for them in heaven
 - _____ from heaven

Revelation 12:9-10

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. 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.

The Great Dragon

- Thrown down
 - That ancient serpent...
 - _____
 - The devil...
 - _____
 - Satan...
 - _____

The Accuser

"The great accuser has been hurled from heaven. He no longer enjoys the privilege of a heavenly courtroom in which to level accusations night and day against the brethren (cf. Rom. 8:33-34). He was overcome, not only by the death of the Lamb, but by the faithful testimony of the believing church as well. Satan is now a defeated foe! Expelled from heaven and rendered powerless by the cross, he is helpless against those who are willing to forfeit their lives in faithful obedience."

Robert Mounce

Satan Cast Out

"From the divine perspective in which John is here seeing things, the ultimate defeat of Satan took place through the death and resurrection of the Slain Lamb—and that is the perspective from which the reader is expected to understand the present imagery." *Gordon Fee*

"This does not portray the primordial expulsion of Satan from heaven. The scene is eschatological. It enters the narrative to explain the intense hostility the church will experience in the last days. When the devil is cast out of heaven, he "is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short""

Robert Mounce

The expulsion of Satan reveals... God's

_____,
 _____...
 the _____ of His Christ...
 the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night
 _____ any longer

Revelation 12:11-12

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!"

The Way to Victory

• "But here also (in 12:11) occurs the key theological sentence of the entire book: "And they triumphed over him 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.""

(Gordon Fee)

- By the _____
- By the _____
- Did not shrink from _____
- _____ in the heavens
- _____ on the earth
- The devil knows his _____

Revelation 12:13-14

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.

The Woman Protected

- The dragon, cast down to earth, _____ the woman (church)
- God _____ His people...
 - Micah 4:10 - ¹⁰ Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued; there the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.
 - Exodus 19:4 - ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore

you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

- Isaiah 40:31 - ³¹ But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

No chapter of the entire Bible has a broader or more timeless sweep than this one. In fact, "timeless" may be the best single term for the episodes here. These are events that keep happening throughout the ages. The woman exists wherever people are committed to God; the dragon always fights against the woman and her son. God always protects his people, despite the fierce satanic onslaughts they must endure.

Kendall Easley

Revelation 12:15-17

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.

The Counterfeit Flood

- The serpent poured _____ out of its mouth
 - To sweep the woman away
- The earth, which opened its own floodgates at the time of the great flood, now _____ the flood from the serpent
- The serpent, unable to harm the woman, wages war on _____
 - Genesis 3:15 – 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.”

- 1 Peter 5:8 – ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The Great Angel vs the Beasts

- Revelation 10:8 describes a great heavenly angel who stands on both land and sea
- Revelation 12:17 describes the great red dragon standing on the sand of the sea
 - Revelation 13 will tell of two beasts, one that comes from the sea and one that comes from the earth
 - These beasts represent an attempt, by the beasts, to exercise dominion over creation
- Revelation 10's description of the great angel was meant to show that God exercises dominion over creations and the beasts will not usurp God's power

The Overcomers

Combining what is said about the "overcomers" (v. 11) and the "offspring" (v. 17), the following portrait of believers living at the end emerges:

- They have personally _____ Christ's death to their own lives
- They hold to Christ's _____ that they have eternal life by faith in him
- They practice lives of _____ to God's commands
- They do not _____ in the word of their testimony when pressure comes
- They are willing to die for Christ's sake