

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. 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. 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. 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." 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.

Introduction

Just in case you think that I have missed out Chapter 11: v.15-19, don't worry we are going to connect this incident with Revelation Chapter 20. I think it would be more appropriate to see them together as they both talk about the reign of Jesus Christ on this earth in the future.

It is too exciting an event to cut in half and I would have to keep referring back to this passage when we get to Revelation Chapter 20.

We now come to Chapter 12.

In Chapter 12 we are introduced to three characters.

These are a "Woman" a "Child" and a "Dragon".

In order to understand the text and how these characters fit into the story of Revelation we need to discover who these people are.

1. **Woman** - The first thing we are told in v. 1 is that a great sign appeared in Heaven. The Greek word for sign is the word "**semeion**" which describes a symbol that points to a reality. If you are wearing a wedding ring, then this fact points to the fact that you are married. If you go to a burial site and see a grave stone, usually the writing on the grave stone points to the fact that someone has died and is buried underneath, or his ashes are in the ground nearby. So what we are looking for in this text is a "Woman" that is symbolic of something. In other words, the "Woman" represents somebody or something. There are four "Women" mention in Revelation who are symbolic in some way. However, the one we are concerned about in Chapter 12 clearly points to this "woman" being a symbol of **ISRAEL**. I need to explain why I have arrived at this conclusion.
Turn with me now to v. 5.

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.

We are told in the verse that the woman gave birth to a male child, who will rule all the nations with a rod of iron.

The child was caught up to God and His throne.

The Old Testament pictures Israel as the adulterous wife.

Turn with me to some references.

Jeremiah Chapter 3: v.1

“They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife,
And she goes from him
And becomes another man’s,
May he return to her again?’
Would not that land be greatly polluted?
But you have played the harlot with many lovers;
Yet return to Me,” says the LORD.

Jeremiah Chapter 3: v. 20

²⁰ Surely, *as* a wife treacherously departs from her husband,
So have you dealt treacherously with Me,
O house of Israel,” says the LORD.

Chapter three of Jeremiah is all about unfaithful Israel.

Ezekiel Chapter 16: v.32-36.

³² *You are* an adulterous wife, *who* takes strangers instead of her husband. ³³ Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry. ³⁴ You are the opposite of *other* women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite.” ³⁵ ‘Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD! ³⁶ Thus says the Lord GOD: “Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them,

Ezekiel Chapter 16 is all about unfaithful Jerusalem.

Finally, Isaiah Chapter 50 v. 1 makes it abundantly clear.

Isaiah Chapter 50: v. 1.

Thus says the LORD: “Where *is* the certificate of your mother’s divorce, Whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, And for your transgressions your mother has been put away.

The Bible gives evidence that the woman represented in chapter 12 is indeed the nation of Israel.

In v. 1 we are given a description of the “Woman”.

The woman was clothed with the “Sun”.

This description reflects Israel’s glory, dignity and exalted status as God’s chosen nation.

Deut. 7: v. 6

⁶ “For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

The “Moon” also reflects Israel.

In the Old Testament we are told that the “Moon” was part of the cycle of Israel’s required times of worship.

In Numbers 29: v.6 in the N.K.J. it talks about the offerings at the feast of trumpets, it mentions the grain offering for the “New Moon”

We are further told that the woman wore a "Garland" of 12 stars on her head. This garland or crown is translated from the Greek word "stephanos" and was the crown associated with triumph or victory.

This was victory in the middle of suffering and struggle.

The 12 stars are the twelve tribes of Israel.

It is all starting to make sense now. The woman is definitely Israel.

John goes on to describe the condition of the woman.

The woman was crying out in labour pains.

Just like a woman in labour who feels pain.

Q. Is there anybody here who has had a baby?

Well you know the pain is not nice. It is very strong.

The nation of Israel was in pain, waiting for the Messiah to come.

There is one interesting point here. When a woman who is having a baby gets contractions or labour pains, the baby is definitely coming. You can't stop it.

God created it this way.

We can't stop the second coming of Jesus, it is going to come one day and Israel will be a significant part of the end time story, wait and see.

The cause of some of her pain was persecution by Satan.

Ever since the promise of a Redeemer in Genesis Chapter 3, Satan has always tried to destroy Israel.

No nation in all of history has suffered so much and so long as Israel.

It has suffered two fold. Firstly, from God's discipline, and secondly from Satan's efforts to destroy them.

During the second world war, 6 million Jews were killed for no other reason than the fact that they were Jews.

Many were killed in gas chambers and others were burnt to death.

This incident has been described as the greatest crime in human history.

It is no wonder that the war against Israel continues right through into the tribulation.

We will discover in a moment what happens to the woman.

By that I mean, what happens to Israel in the tribulation.

2. The Dragon – v.3.

We are now introduced to another character. It is a great fiery red dragon.

There are no problems with the identity of this dragon.

We are told in v. 9 that it is the devil who is also called Satan.

Satan is no more an actual dragon than Israel is a woman. However, the symbolic language used to describe him gives us a picture of his character.

It is only in Revelation that Satan is described as a dragon.

In the words of Jesus, Satan was a murderer from the beginning.

(John 8: v. 44)

The devil, deceives, distracts, diverts, and attempts to destroy all that is good in this world.

He usually looks attractive at first and the Bible describes him as an angel of light. (The Shining One)

In contemporary terms the devil has been described like the fish bait used to catch a popular fish in the U.K. called "Mackerel".

"Mackerel" are attracted to shiny things in the water.

If you put some kitchen foil on the end of a fish hook you are likely to catch lots of "Mackerel" if you fish in the English Channel.

Once the "Mackerel" see the shiny object they bite it and are immediately hooked in by the fish hook.

The devil is like this. He makes things seem attractive on the outside and when people respond to his temptations they are often hooked in to things that bind them and are difficult to be set free from.

Recently on face book I saw a game advertised that was packaged in a beautiful way to attract children.

It was a game that is designed by Satan to entice young people to get interested in evil spirits and the dark underworld that although we can't see it with our eyes, nevertheless exists.

The game is called "Ouija"

It seems a harmless game but I have a true story to tell you about this game that will alarm you.

When I was a Pastor in London a man came to our Church who was suffering some depression and bad behaviour.

At one time I was called to his home by his wife when they were having problems.

At that time, he had a gun and it was loaded ready to kill.

Later as I talked with him, lots of problems were revealed and I discovered the source of all his problems.

He used to be a fireman.

During the waiting times in the fire station where they slept they started to play the game "Ouija".

As a result of playing this game, some of the firemen committed suicide and other were killed in mysterious circumstances.

In fact, the person I tried to help also tried to commit suicide but something stopped him.

In the end he was the only person to survive after playing the "Ouija" game.

Eventually the person became a Christian and he was delivered from the demons who haunted him.

So beware of things that might look attractive, they may be satanic in their origin.

Please warn people about playing this game. "Ouija"

The devil works little by little to lure us away from God's plans and purposes for our lives. "Beware of his schemes"

The devil in the text is described as having 7 heads, and 10 horns, and 7 diadems on his heads.

Some Bible scholars believe that the 7 heads represent 7 world empires. The last of these empires are controlled by the "Anti-Christ"

These same scholars also think that the 10 horns represent the 10 kings who will rule under the "Anti-Christ"

Today it is not hard to think that in the future, 10 nations, or groups of countries will one- day rule the world.

It is also not hard to think that one person will rise up as a ruler of all these nations or groups of countries.

Today we live in a "Global Village" and the big nations meet on a regular basis to decide trade matters and make decisions that affect our lives.

Fifty years ago it would have been difficult to comprehend how 10 nations could control the world, now it is happening.

3. The "Male Child" – v. 5

We are introduced to a male child in v. 5. It is not hard to discover the identity of this person.

The male child was going to rule the nations with a rod of iron.

Turn with me to Psalm 2. –

Why do the nations rage,

And the people plot a vain thing?

² The kings of the earth set themselves,

And the rulers take counsel together,

Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying,*

³ "Let us break Their bonds in pieces

And cast away Their cords from us."

⁴ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;

The Lord shall hold them in derision.

⁵ Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,

And distress them in His deep displeasure:

⁶ "Yet I have set My King

On My holy hill of Zion."

⁷ "I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
'You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
⁸ Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."
¹⁰ Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
¹² Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

We are also told that this child was caught up to God and His throne.
We know that the resurrection of Jesus Christ fits verse 5 very well.
Jesus was raised from the dead and is sitting at the right hand of God.

Having identified these 3 characters, we now proceed to engage with the text about what is going on in this chapter.

There are two wars going on in this chapter.

In v. 7-12 we have a description of a war going on in Heaven and in v. 13-17 we are told of a war on the earth.

The war mainly concerns Satan and his followers versus Israel who is described as the Woman

The War in Heaven – v. 7-12.

The first two chapters of the book of Job teach us that Satan has access to heaven.

In Zechariah Chapter 3 we are told that Satan accuses the saints, that is the believers, before the throne of God.

This activity of Satan lines up with v. 10 where we are told that **Satan spends most of his time accusing Christians of wrong things before God.**

In v. 12 we are told that Satan's time is very short.

So sometime in the middle of the tribulation, Satan will be cast out of Heaven and sent to the earth.

Satan is described as someone who deceives the whole world.

He is thrown down to the earth with his supporting Angels.

Satan who has lost the war in heaven is now concentrating his efforts on the earth.

The War on the earth – v. 13-17.

The liar in heaven now becomes the lion on the earth.

Satan focuses his attacks mainly upon Israel.

We now know if we did not know before that "Anti-Semitism", or the persecution of the Jews is satanic in origin.

Throughout Israel's history they have always been persecuted as a nation.

Egypt persecuted the Jews, but God rescued them from this powerful nation, through miracle plagues.

Babylon persecuted the Jews, but God in His mercy brought back a remnant to re-populate Israel and re-build Jerusalem.

Germany tried to destroy the Jewish nation, but they failed and God used many people to rescue the Jews at this time, even Japanese people.

Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat saved 6,000 Jews during the "Holocaust". He issued transit visas to Jews so that they could travel to Japan, arriving in the port of Kobe.

He risked his job and his life.

God plans to protect the Jewish nation during the tribulation.

We are told that Israel will be given “two wings of a great eagle” so that she can fly into the wilderness to be protected from Satan and all his angels.

In v. 15 we are told that one of the attacks on the nation of Israel is going to be a “flood”.

The enemies of Israel are going to somehow try to flood Israel.

Perhaps they will try and blow up a dam or something like that.

We are told that the earth swallowed up the water and Israel was saved.

God is able to do this. He has swallowed up things before.

Numbers Chapter 16: v. 31-33.

³¹ Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them,

³² and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all *their* goods. ³³ So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly.

These are the dramatic things that will happen to Israel in the second half of the tribulation.

Application

There are 4 practical lessons that I would like to draw out from this chapter.

1. Satan is at war with Christians today. However, we can overcome Satan, but only through faith in the word of God, and through our testimony, if we have been saved by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must make sure that our “faith” is in the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross for our sins.

2. Do not forget that Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Christians) It was the sins of the believers that gave Satan the evidence to accuse us before the throne of God. Thank God that we have an Advocate in Jesus Christ.

1 John 1: v. 9 – 2: v. 2.

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

When we confess our sins, Jesus Christ cleanses us, and Satan is silenced.

3. Be very careful that you do not accuse another Christian without a very good reason and only in love.

If you accuse the brethren falsely or without cause, then you are on Satan’s side doing his work. No sincere Christian would ever want to be an instrument of Satan.!!!

4. We must NEVER be guilty of “Anti-Semitism” that is the persecution of the Jewish people. The Jews are God’s chosen people.

If it wasn’t for Israel, we would have NO BIBLE and NO SAVIOUR. Jesus was a Jew when He was on this earth, He is still a Jew in heaven and will be a Jew when He returns to this earth again. Never forget that.

We must love Israel, pray for its peace and seek to win Jewish people for the Lord Jesus.

The nation of Israel may not always be right politically, but they are God’s people and He will protect them and bless them. That is why the Bible tells us to PRAY for the PEACE of Jerusalem. (Psalm 122: v. 6-7)