

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

We are going to continue our study through the book of Revelation – turn to Revelation 12.

For the past couple of weeks, we have been looking at God's judgment upon those that reject the Lamb –

And what we have been seeing in our study over the past couple of weeks through the sounding of the trumpets is God giving the people what they wanted all along.

A world without Him.

And as bad as the devastation that will be brought forth by the trumpets – things will only get worse.

Things will begin to accelerate toward their climax in the Return of Jesus Christ.

But before we get to the bowls, John provides us with God's dealing with the nation of Israel and with His treatment of the devil.

Let's pray...

[Rev 12:1-18 NKJV] 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.

Before we get to the identity of the woman –

I want to point out that John says at the beginning of verse 1 – that this was a great sign – and the word that is used here for sign, is the word for token or symbol.

Meaning that the woman that is spoken of here is not really a literal woman.

And the reason I point this out is because there are many religious groups that misinterpret Revelation 12 and the identity of the woman.

For those of us that have a background in Catholicism – the identity is translated as Mary. That is why in some of the statues and paintings that depict Mary – show her standing on top of a crescent moon. **Show pics**

If you know anyone who is into Christian Science – they will say that the woman in Rev 12 is Mary Baker Eddy – the founder of that religion.

Mormons and the Seventh Day Adventist believe that the woman is the church.

So the question is – well who is the woman?

Well, like I have said before, the best commentary on the bible is the bible itself.

And the bible clearly tells us who this woman is.

Turn with me to Genesis 37 –

Because the symbolism that we see here in Rev 12 –

Was given to Joseph in one of his dreams.

[Gen 37:9-11 NKJV] 9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." 10 So he told [it] to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What [is] this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" 11 And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter [in mind].

When Joseph revealed this dream to his father Jacob –

Jacob picked up on the symbolism.

Jacob was the sun

Rachel – the moon

And the other eleven brothers – the stars

That is why he said – Joseph, are you saying that your mom and I along with your eleven brothers are going to bow to you?

Turn with me to Isaiah 60.

[Isa 60:1-3 NKJV] 1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. 2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And

deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. 3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, **And kings to the brightness of your rising.**

Notice the symbolism here –

Isaiah is talking about your light and the brightness of your rising (like that of the sun)

Isaiah is referring to Israel.

This prophecy will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ establishes His kingdom here on earth for 1000 years and the nation of Israel will be lifted up among all nations.

So the woman here in Revelation 12 is referring to the nation of Israel.

Because even though they rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah, God is not done with them yet.

2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

The child here is Jesus Christ

And the crying out here is in reference to the cries of the people of Israel while they were under the occupation of Israel.

The people were crying out to God for deliverance – just like they had done while they were in bondage in Egypt.

And they anticipated God sending them their Messiah –

The problem was that they were looking for a military and political leader – not the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

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.

Now, the identity of the fiery red dragon is revealed to us in verse 9 – it is Satan himself.

If you compare this verse here with Revelation 13:1 and Daniel 7 –

What we are seeing is Satan's manifestation in the person of the antichrist who will come to reign over the ten-nation confederacy that comprises a revival of the Roman Empire.

And Daniel 7 says that as the Antichrist rises to power, he will overthrow three of the ten nations – leaving seven.

Horns in scripture are symbolic in scripture for earthly powers – nations, governmental systems.

And the diadems are symbolic of his royal authority.

4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.

This is in reference to Satan's fall that occurred before creation.

When God created angels, He gave them freewill –

And there was a point where the angels decided who they were going to follow- they exercised their free will.

1/3 of them chose to follow Lucifer.

And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

From the time God announced His plan of redemption in the Garden of Eden –

“Her Seed will crush the serpents head”, Satan sought to thwart God’s plan.

- He filled Cain with envy and hatred for Abel and moved him to kill him, hopefully putting an end to the promise of a Deliverer.
- He tempted Abraham to forgo God’s plan by having a child with Hagar
- He gave the idea of killing all the Hebrew male babies
- He stirred up King Saul to try to kill David
- He inspired Haman to try to kill all of the Jews – Esther.
- In 2 Chronicles 21-22, he almost succeeded as David’s descendants were reduced to one little boy – Joash, who was kept in hiding for 6 years
- When Jesus was born, Herod sent his troops to have all the young children killed
- When Jesus was tempted - In Matthew 4, the devil tried to kill him by convincing him to throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple.

- Then, at the Cross, the devil thought he'd accomplished his objective. But his rejoicing was short for the Cross proved to be the catalyst that began the unraveling of his plans.
- Then after the cross, he turned his attention against Israel. That is why there is so much hatred toward Israel today.

Yet despite all of the devil's hatred and clever strategies – God's plan goes forward.

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.

Once again, the she is in reference to the woman (Israel) – and the male Child is Jesus Christ –

Here in verse 5 – we find a reference to His birth, His death, Resurrection and Ascension -

[Psa 2:7-9 NKJV] 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.' "

So then what becomes of the woman?

We find out in verse 6 -

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.

Verse 6 speaks of something that hasn't happened yet –

This refers to something that will happen at the 3.5 year mark of the Tribulation Period.

When they recognize that the Antichrist is an imposter and not their savior – and they will know that Jesus is.

The message of the two witnesses will accomplish its God intended purpose and they will come to faith in Christ.

However, because they rejected the antichrist as an imposter, they will then have to flee his wrath and they will go to a place that God prepares for them.

Many people believe this to be the city of Petra – where God will protect them for 3.5 years.

By the way, the city of Petra is on accessible by horseback –

And if you want to look at a few bible references to Petra -

Isaiah 16:1-4, Isaiah 42:10-13 to come to that conclusion.

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.

Notice that the battle is not between Satan and God.

Why?

Because God has no equal.

So he appoints Michael and the angels under him to battle Satan and his demons.

Turn with me to Dan 12 -

[Dan 12:1-3 NKJV] 1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands [watch] over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, [Even] to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame [and] everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

Once again, this battle will occur at the 3.5 year mark of the Great Tribulation.

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.

Whose voice is this in verse 10 –

We know it can't be God's voice and it can't be an angel's voice – it has to be someone who has been redeemed – because it refers to our brethren.

So most likely, this is the voice of one of the Tribulation saints – celebrating that Satan will not be able to accuse the believer anymore.

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**.

As we've seen, one of Satan's major works is that of accusing or condemning.

With it, he alienates us from God and makes us ineffective.

But here in verse 11 – we have the three keys to spiritual victory – to overcoming satan's attacks.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb -

It's the blood of the Lamb that cleanses us and frees us from all condemnation.

[1Jo 1:7 NKJV] 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When we are under condemnation, we confess our sins, receive God's cleansing, then we can say, "We've been washed in the blood".

They overcame him by the word of their testimony -

The word of their testimony refers to how we hold on to God's promises.

In the same way that Satan uses condemnation to alienate us from God, he uses deception – “God doesn't care about you”, God has abandoned you

But if we know His word and our testimony bears His work in our lives, we now that his deceptions are untrue.

They did not love their lives to the death

Some people in the Tribulation will fall because they loved their lives to the death.

When having to make a decision between taking the mark of the beast and dying of hunger, they will take the mark of the beast.

Those who overcome satan are those that are selfless –

they are not going to compromise what they know to be right – even if it means death.

[Mar 8:35 NKJV] 35 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

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."

Being kicked out of heaven has dealt the devil a serious setback to his plans of usurping God's throne.

He knows his time is short -

He knows his loss of place is tied directly to the victory of Christ at the Cross, and that reminds him of his failed attempts to destroy Israel.

So he becomes enraged at her (Israel) existence and goes forth in great anger to annihilate her.

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.

So once again, John is providing details on how God is going to treat Israel –

And we see the satan persecuting Israel – and I had you make a note where it states that the woman was given two wings of a great eagle.

Some have tried to speculate that this is how God is going to safely transport the Jews to Petra – and they will speculate that God will use cargo planes to transport them.

He could –

But I think this is simply a reference to God's intervention as He rescues the Jews.

And I say this because in the book of Exodus, when God is speaking to Moses, He tells Moses to remind the Children of Israel of the following -

[Exo 19:4 NKJV] 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Did God use cargo planes in the Exodus? Of course not – it is in reference to His intervention.

And once again we see that God will sustain them for the 3.5 year period.

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.

I had you make a note of like a flood – again, John clearly tells us that it is not a physical flood – but something that resembles a flood.

Now, in the Old Testament, a flood is used to describe an army.

So it could be that a massive army under the direction of the Antichrist is going to go after the Jews that are fleeing the Antichrist and then God delivers the Jews using a supernatural event.

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.

After Satan realizes that the woman is protected, He will turn his anger toward those who come to faith in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation Period.

From the time of his fall, Satan has continued to fight a war he knows he can't win.

The question becomes – why doesn't he simply just quit rebelling against God???

And the answer is the same reason that the world rebels against God – sin.

Next week, we are going to get more insight into the antichrist.

So read 13.

Let's pray ...

