

Revelation 12 Outline

Roderick Graciano, February, 2014

First Sign: The Woman

The symbolism taken from Joseph's dream (Gen 37.9-10) clearly identifies this glorious woman as Israel. Though this sign appear "in heaven," it is a sign of earthly realities. We see that the real "woman" is on earth in Rev 12.13-16.

Crying Out, Laboring To Give Birth

Israel's labor to give birth to the Messiah was no common labor! Since Joseph's time, going from national crisis to national crisis, the people of Israel cried out for centuries that God would at long last send His Messiah.

Second Sign: The Fiery Red Dragon

Dragon Casts Stars From Heaven To The Earth

The stars just referred to in this context (Rev 12.1) represent the patriarchs and tribes of Israel. The casting down of stars by the Dragon speaks of the satanic destruction of a sizeable portion of Israel before the coming of Messiah.

Seeking To Devour The Woman's Child

The Dragon's pre-Messianic persecution of the stars is in the hope of precluding Messiah's coming. If Messiah *does* come, the Dragon hopes to destroy Him at the outset of His ministry (Matthew 4.1-11).

Messianic Child Born, Caught Up To God And Throne

This is a prophetic compression of the entire life of Christ from His birth to His ascension. As such, it is an important chronological marker in this vision. What follows occurs *after* the time of Christ's earthly ministry.

Woman Fled Into Wilderness, Place Prepared

"They" Nourish The Woman 1,260 Days

This is the second important chronological marker. The beginning of the 1,260 days (3¹/₂ years) marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation proper (as described by Daniel). This reference to that period is a *flash forward* to the time of the

woman's *final* and most intense persecution described in verses 13-16.

Whether there is a specific “they” and who “they” might be who nourish the woman during the Tribulation time remains an open question.

War In Heaven: Michael vs. Dragon

Dragon & His Angels Lose Place In Heaven

It appears that while Satan could no longer reside in Heaven after his rebellion (Eze 28.14-16), he could visit God's presence where he would regularly accuse God's people (Job 1.6-11; Rev 12.10).

Dragon & His Angels Thrown Down To Earth

The most difficult question about the vision of Rev 12 is the question of *when* the Dragon is thrown down to the earth. Our appropriately pious inclination is to identify that time as the moment at which the atoning work of Jesus was completed. This vision, however, does not point us directly to the atonement, but to the angelic war in heaven *reflecting the spiritual battle of the martyrs on earth!*

Remember the spiritual battle that Daniel fought for 21 days (Dan 10). As Daniel battled in prayer and fasting, the angels fought in heaven until Michael's aid resulted in a breakthrough and the Lord was able to answer Daniel's prayer for understanding.

It would appear, therefore, that the war in heaven described in Rev 12 is the angelic war paralleling the spiritual warfare of the saints (“our brethren”) on earth. As the saints on earth prevail (νικάω) “by the blood of the Lamb” and their testimony unto death, the angels in heaven are able to throw the Dragon down! This fits with the enigmatic response of Jesus to the 70 disciples in Luke 10.18. It was when the disciples prevailed in preaching and healing on earth, that Jesus was *watching* (ἐθεώπων, imperfect tense = continuing activity in the past) Satan fall.

All this implies that while the casting down of Satan is ultimately enabled by the atoning work of Jesus (“by the blood of the lamb”), it is an event that happens over time as God builds His kingdom on earth *through the sacrificial testimony of the saints*. In other words, while the *legal* casting down of Satan clearly occurred at the time of Jesus' atoning work, this vision pictures the *practical* casting down of Satan brought about through the earthly work of the saints. The further implication of the vision is that this practical and decisive casting down of the Dragon will culminate at the end of the age, and its culmination will precipitate the time of the Great Tribulation.

Voice In Heaven

Now salvation, power, kingdom and authority of Christ have come!

This is the voice of anticipation. All the decisive battles (legal and practical) have been fought, but the Dragon is not completely bound yet!

Brethren overcame... !

Rejoice O Heavens!

Woe to the earth and sea!

Here we have an instance of earth (γῆ) meaning *land* in contrast to sea. In the coming chapters of the Revelation, judgments are about to be poured out on both land and sea.

Dragon Persecuted Woman

Woman Flies To Her Prepared Place

Woman Nourished For A Time, Times And Half A Time

This is the time of the beginning of the Great Tribulation proper, the last 3¹/₂ years of our age, when the Dragon will manifest his character and agenda through the Beast, and violently persecute Israelites and Christians.

Serpent Spews A River To Sweep Away Woman

I believe the river from the Serpent's mouth is a verbal attack, perhaps a massive propaganda campaign waged in the world media.

Earth Helps Woman By Drinking Up River

If Satan's river is indeed a propaganda campaign, this part of the vision provides hope that in the end the Gentile world, or at least the Christians in it, will once again turn in sympathy toward Israel and combat the Serpent's lies in the media.

Dragon Makes War With Christians

This is a turning point in the narrative of the War vision. The going off of the dragon to make war with those who "hold the testimony of Jesus" (Rev 12.17) introduces the narrative of Rev 13. Rev 13 describes the rise of the Beast (Antichrist) and further events of the Great Tribulation proper.