

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

Introduction:

1. With the sounding of the seven trumpets, one section of the book of Revelation ended.
2. The second section begins with chapter 12 and the vision of the conflict between the woman and the dragon.
3. God begins to show His people how He will protect them and defeat Rome.

- I. The Dragon Seeks to Destroy the Woman's Child (12:1-6)
 - A. John was shown a great sign in heaven – a woman and a red dragon.
 - B. The clothing of the woman is described to emphasize its significance.
 1. She is clothed with the light of the sun, moon, and stars.
 2. This is symbolic of the totality of revealed truth from God.
 3. Patriarchal Age – *starlight*; Mosaic Age – *moonlight*; Christian Age – *sunlight* (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2; Ephesians 3:4-5; 1 Peter 1:10-12)
 4. The word for “crown” indicates the crown of victory.
 - C. Furthermore, this woman was experiencing the pains of labor as she waited for the birth of her child.
 1. This was not the virgin Mary nor the Jewish nation.
 2. This woman is the faithful remnant who, through the ages of time, labored for God and against Satan in hope of redemption (Micah 4:10; 5:2-3; Isaiah 66:7-8).
 3. Yet, faithful Christians are also represented by this woman, for they are also God's remnant (cf. vs. 17; Hebrews 9:15; 11:40).
 - D. As John viewed the woman, another sign appeared – a great red dragon.
 1. He is identified as Satan (vs. 9).
 2. He is great – meaning, powerful and wielding mighty influence.
 3. He is red – symbolizing bloodshed and murder (cf. John 8:44).
 4. He has seven heads – indicating fullness of intellect or wisdom (craftiness in deception) (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:3).
 5. He has ten horns – symbolizing complete power, though limited to the earthly realm (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:4; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
 6. He wears seven crowns – representing royalty or rule.
 - E. The dragon's power is shown by his casting down of 1/3 of the stars with his tail (cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Daniel 8:10, 24).
 - F. The dragon's purpose is shown by his attention to the woman's child.
 1. Satan has tried to destroy God's faithful and thwart God's plan of salvation from the Garden of Eden.
 2. Later, he will continue this agenda by persecuting the church.
 3. But now, his focus is on destroying the woman's child – Jesus (Matthew 2:13-16; 4:1-11; Luke 22:3; John 13:27).
 - G. Yet, this woman gave birth to a mighty man who ascended to rule over His kingdom.
 - H. Since the kingdom of Christ now exists, the faithful remnant come into it and flee into the wilderness for protection from God.

The Book of Revelation

Lesson Twenty-Two

Revelation 12:1-17

- II. The Dragon Wars with Michael (12:7-12)
- A. Before finding out what happened to the woman, John was presented with a vision of the great spiritual battle against Satan.
 - 1. The reader must keep in mind the symbolic nature of the book.
 - 2. This is not a literal war that took place in the ancient past, leading to Satan's being cast out of Heaven.
 - B. The symbolism is meant to convey the true nature of Satan – as a defeated opponent.
 - C. The dragon is identified clearly in verse 9.
 - 1. He is the serpent (cf. Genesis 3).
 - 2. He is the Devil – *accuser, slanderer*
 - 3. He is Satan – *adversary, enemy, opponent*
 - 4. He is a deceiver (cf. 1 Tim. 2:14)
 - D. The result of this spiritual battle is certain – the devil is defeated (cf. Daniel 10:12-13; John 12:31; 16:11; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8).
 - E. Thus, a loud voice from Heaven declared the victory of God over Satan.
 - F. Though this victory of salvation is available to everyone, it is realized only by those who are faithful to the Lord.
 - 1. They overcome by the blood of the Lamb.
 - 2. They overcome by remaining faithful to their confession of faith.
 - 3. They overcome by being willing to die for the cause of Christ.
 - G. There is rejoicing in the heavens because of this victory (Ephesians 1:3).
 - H. In contrast, there is woe for those who dwell on the earth and in the sea.
 - 1. The sea often symbolizes the “sea of humanity” or the mass of society.
 - 2. The earth may stand for the unregenerate world, the worldly-minded who become tools of the devil.
 - I. Because of his defeat, Satan is filled with great wrath and will use what little time he has to bring havoc upon the world.
- III. The Dragon Persecutes the Woman (12:13-17)
- A. The primary focus of Satan's wrath is God's faithful remnant, the church.
 - B. Though the devil sought to destroy the church, God protected her.
 - 1. The imagery recalls the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (cf. Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11; Psalm 36:7; Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:31).
 - 2. God carried them on eagle's wings to a place prepared for them.
 - 3. In a real sense, the church exists in the wilderness – separate from the world.
 - C. This period of persecution would not last forever, for it is limited by God (cf. vs. 6; 11:2-3).
 - D. Satan would try to sweep the church away with a flood of error and lies.
 - E. However, the faithful would not be deceived and the earth would swallow up the devil's lies.
 - F. Because He could not defeat the Christ or His church, Satan turned his attacks upon the individual Christians.
 - G. Now, they would face severe persecution on an individual basis, simply for living in obedience to God's commandments.
 - H. Thankfully, victory was assured if they would remain faithful, even unto death.