

The Big Picture Revelation 12

Revelation 12 Introduction

- This is a “big” chapter for two reasons:
 1. It repeatedly uses the Greek word *meegas*, meaning “big, great, grand, loud or large.”
 2. It gives us the “big picture,” of the age-old angelic struggle and how the nation of Israel fits in, especially at the time of the end.

Revelation 12 Outline

- I. The Woman, the Dragon, the Child 12:1-6
- II. War In Heaven 12:7-12
- III. Hell on Earth 12:13-17

Conclusion: Defeating the Devil

The Woman, the Dragon, the Child 12:1-6

- 12:1-2 Who is the woman?
- Some would say the Virgin Mary.
- As a result, Marian iconography has often used the symbolism of a 12-starred garland around Mary’s head.
- No can argue that Mary gave birth to the Child in question in this chapter.
- Nonetheless, the rest of the chapter doesn’t match up with anything we see in the Bible pertaining to Mary
- Further, John describes the woman as a “sign,” anticipating further symbolic meaning.
- If we look for similar symbolism elsewhere in the Bible, we find something significant way back in Genesis 37:9-10.
- Jacob interpreted Joseph’s dream as pertaining to the whole family of Israel.
- Why are there 12 stars here rather than 11?
- Because Joseph is also part of the nation that gives birth to the Male Child.

- 12:3 Who is the dragon?
- This one turns out to be easy, because John tells us down in 12:9.

- 12:4 What are the stars?
- Stars in Revelation frequently refer to angels.
- We have the seven angels of the seven churches at the beginning of the book.
- A star falls from heaven in Revelation 9:1 and is given the key to the bottomless pit.
- Here Satan throws one third of the stars of heaven to earth.
- Does that mean 1/3 of the angels of heaven were involved in the rebellion of Satan and have now become “fallen angels” or demons?
- Biblically, this is not a dumb idea.

- 12:4 As for the dragon attempting to devour the child as soon as it was born, we may remember Herod's reaction to hearing that there was another King of the Jews.
 - See Matthew 2:16 if you want to read about it.
- 12:5 As for the Male Child:
 - In Psalm 2:7-9, a messianic passage, we see the imagery of the rod of iron.
 - If you want to read about Christ's ascension, the reference is Acts 1:9-11.
 - Fun Fact: The word John uses, translated "caught up" is the same one Paul uses referring to the rapture of the church.
- 12:6 At some point after Christ's ascension, the woman is forced to flee to the wilderness. Later we'll see why.
 - The 1260 days are equal to 42 months of 30 days each. (Remember Israel was on a lunar calendar, so the months are all equal.)
 - This is also referred to as "a time and times and half a time" (12:14) or 3 ½ years.
 - The 3 ½ year time period indicates that the woman will be protected for the latter half of the seven-year period.
 - The seven-year period is defined back in Daniel 9:27, in the prophecy of the 70 weeks.

War In Heaven 12:7-12

- 12:7-8 Michael is one of the chief angels in heaven and has a special association with the nation of Israel.
 - See Daniel 12:1.
- The dragon and his angels lose in an epic struggle with Michael and his angels.
- Notice that Satan, though powerful, is on the same level as Michael, not as God.
- 12:9 The great dragon, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan
 - He is all of these things and is identified by various terms throughout the Bible.
 - One of his favorite pastimes is deceiving the whole world.
 - We are not really told why the devil and his angels have access to heaven now.
 - We are told that they will one day lose that access to heaven once and for all.
 - From this point, half way through the 70th week of the prophet Daniel, the devil's days are literally numbered.
- 12:10-11 The great dragon, identified as the serpent, the Devil and Satan, is here called "the accuser of our brethren."
 - One of his other favorite pastimes is that he accuses us before God day and night.
 - Each of us has no doubt given him way too much material to work with.
 - The voice from heaven declares that these Tribulation saints were able to defeat the devil in three ways:
 - By the blood of the Lamb
 - By the word of their testimony
 - And they did not love their lives to the death.

- We'll talk more about Defeating the Devil in our conclusion.
- 12:12 Heaven just got more heavenly, because the devil will never be allowed to show his ugly face up there again.
- The earth, on the other hand, is about to get more hellish. The big dragon has big wrath.
- Thomas: *"A portion of the world already in the throes of God's wrath must now add to that the fury of the archenemy of God."*

Hell on Earth 12:13-17

- 12:13 When the devil gets bored with lying and accusing you and me, his final favorite pastime is persecuting the nation of Israel.
- We can see it from the time of Pharaoh, to Haman, Herod and Hitler, through the Holocaust and down to the present day.
- What nation has had so long a history and so many enemies who were so fully determined to see that nation destroyed?
- The best explanation we will ever have for it is that the devil hates the Jews and loves to deceive the nations.
- God loves the Jews – and through them He gave the world its Messiah.
- Mental Note 1: That alone is enough reason for the devil to hate them.
- Mental Note 2: That alone is enough reason for Christians to love them dearly.
- 12:14 This flight into the wilderness is the same one Jesus spoke about in His Olivet Discourse – which we find at the end of the first three Gospels.
 - For example, in Mark 13:14-23.
- The imagery of eagle's wings was used in the Bible before, to refer to Israel's exodus from Egypt.
 - See Exodus 19:4
- This time they will actually be leaving their own land and seeking shelter in the wilderness.
- So where does the woman go?
- This verse tells us she has a special place to hide from the serpent.
- Earlier, in 12:6, we read that the place was prepared especially for her by God.
- One possibility is found in Isaiah 16:1-4.
- The name Sela means "rock" and is an ancient city now commonly known as Petra in Jordan.
- 12:15-17 It's probably too speculative to try to say how this is exactly going to look.
- The water or flood could be literal, but there is biblical precedent for it to be an attack by invading armies.
- Either way, the woman is protected, the dragon is enraged and spends the rest of his energies making war with anyone left who is a follower of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 12 Conclusions

Defeating the Devil

- Knowing Your Enemy
- Resisting Your Enemy
- Overcoming Your Enemy

Knowing Your Enemy:

- The name Satan comes from Hebrew and means “opponent, enemy or adversary.”
 - Devil comes from Greek and means “slanderer or accuser.” He is one who speaks maliciously against others – against people like us.
 - He also speaks evil of God to people.
 - He is the great Deceiver or Father of Lies.
- In this chapter we’ve seen that the devil loves to spend his time in three related activities.
 - Deceiving the whole world.
 - Accusing God’s people.
 - Persecuting the Jews – and any others who would keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Resisting Your Enemy:

- When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He responded to each temptation by quoting from Scripture.
- Apply the Word to your temptation. It pits the truth against the devil’s lies.
- James 4:7-8 connects resisting the devil to repentance and submission to God.
- Defeating the Devil

Overcoming Your Enemy:

- Revelation 12:11 showed us three things related to overcoming our Accuser. They were:
 - The blood of the Lamb.
 - The power of our testimony or “witness.”
 - Not loving our lives to the death.
- Getting the big picture about life in this universe means giving Jesus his rightful place – on the throne of our lives.
- And giving the devil his – in the garbage dump of eternal dishonor.