

51. The Book of Revelation—12:1-4

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Revelation Chapters 12–13 introduces us to the three key characters in the drama of the 70th week of Daniel (the Tribulation): Satan the Dragon, the False Christ known as the Antichrist, and the False Prophet.

These three are an evil '*satanic trinity*' opposing the true God and His people on earth.

Revelation 12:1 (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.

"Now a great sign appeared in heaven".

This is the first of seven signs that appear in Chapters 12-13:

1. *A woman clothed with the sun (Revelation 12:1-2)*
2. *The red dragon with seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 12:3-4)*
3. *The male Child (Revelation 12:5-6)*
4. *The Archangel Michael, casting Satan out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-12)*
5. *The offspring of the woman, persecuted by the dragon (Revelation 12:13-17)*
6. *The beast out of the sea, the future world dictator we call the Antichrist (Revelation 13:2-10)*
7. *The beast out of the earth, also known as the false prophet (Revelation 13:11-18).*

Chapters 12 and 13 don't advance the narrative chronologically, but recap and amplify what has already taken place (a flashback) and give us some extra details that we didn't get from the preceding Chapters. Chronologically, we have already entered into the second half of the 70th week of Daniel (Chapter 9)—but Chapter 12 takes us back to the midpoint of the Tribulation Period.

Chapter 13 takes us back to the very beginning of the 70th week of Daniel when Antichrist first shows up on the world scene (Revelation 6:1-2)—the chronological progression of events resumes in Chapter 15.

Revelation 12:1-2 (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. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

Understanding who this woman is, is not only the key to understanding Chapter 12—in many ways it's the key to understanding the entire Book of Revelation.

So, who is 'she'?

Throughout history, there have been a number of suggestions—

1. Christian Scientists claim this woman is Mary Baker Eddy the founder of Christian Science.

They believe the “**child**” is Christian Science which Mary Baker Eddy gave ‘birth’ to.

The “**dragon**” they teach is the ‘*mortal mind*’ trying to destroy the “*sacred writings*” contained in “*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*” which was written by Mary Baker Eddy.

2. The Roman Catholic Church believes and teaches that this woman is Mary the mother of Jesus.

The problem with that view is—Mary the mother of Jesus never fled into the wilderness where she was protected by God for 3½ years—as we see this woman does in verse 6.

3. Many Protestants claim this woman is the “Church.”

However, if this woman is the Church, she is in big trouble—why? Because she’s pregnant!

In the New Testament, the Church is always referred to as the “**virgin Bride of Christ.**” Besides, the Church didn’t give birth to Jesus—Jesus gave birth to the Church! How so?

The Church (the Bride of Christ) couldn’t become a reality without Jesus dying on the cross first—His death made the Church possible by giving the Church life.

It was a rib (or simply some DNA) taken from Adam’s side that God used to ‘birth’ Eve—so, too, as Jesus (the ‘last Adam’) hung on the cross, it was the blood and water (symbols for the Church for centuries) flowing from His side when pierced with the Roman soldier’s spear that symbolically birthed the Church.

Historically, the Church didn’t start until Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus died, rose, ascended back to heaven and the Holy Spirit was poured out...but it was His death on the cross that gave life to the Church.

So, this woman isn’t Mary Baker Eddy, or the virgin Mary or the Church—so then, who is she?

Remember we said that out of the 404 verses in the Book of Revelation there are over 800 references to the Old Testament.

Therefore, is there anything in the Old Testament that could give us an indication, an interpretation as to who this “woman” is?

Genesis 37:5-11 (NKJV)

⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, and he told *it* to his brothers; and they hated him even more. ⁶ So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷ There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. 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 [*Jacob i.e., 'Israel' interprets the dream for us*] 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*.

(And of course, as the story in Genesis unfolds that is exactly what happened.)

The woman in Revelation 12 symbolizes **Israel**, as indicated by Genesis 37:9-11, where the sun and the moon referred to Jacob and Rachel—Joseph's parents.

The stars in the woman's crown clearly relates to the 12 sons of Jacob and thus identifies the woman as Israel fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant by giving birth to the Messiah—"Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth." (Revelation 12:2)

Revelation 12:3 (NKJV)

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.

We don't have to guess who this fiery red dragon is because verse 9 tells us—

Revelation 12:9 (NKJV)

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.

Satan, of course, is not an actual **dragon** (any more than Israel is an actual woman)—this is symbolic language.

Only in Revelation is Satan referred to as a '**dragon**'—before he is called a *dragon* he is first called a "*serpent*" (Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3). Why the change in language describing Satan? I think primarily because, a serpent is subtle in its attacks—in that regard it works through stealth.

A dragon on the other hand is a creature that is so powerful that it doesn't have to attack through stealth—it can attack its prey openly and directly.

Understand, at this point in the history of the world (Tribulation Period) Satan no longer has to disguise himself as an "angel of light" and use stealth to devour his prey (unbelievers)—at this point Satan is through deceiving by stealth or subtlety as a serpent.

Now the mask has come off and his deception becomes blatant and, "*in your face*" (which is why he is referred to as a dragon instead of serpent)!

By this point in the Tribulation Period there is a moral inversion where the true God (the God of the Bible) is looked upon by the people of the world (the followers of Antichrist) as the devil, and the devil is worshipped as the 'true god'. So at this point Satan is called a 'dragon' instead of a 'serpent'.

The color **red** is only mentioned twice in the Book of Revelation—right here in Revelation 12:3 and in Revelation 6:4 where it is speaking of the second horseman of the apocalypse—

Revelation 6:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

So, this horseman riding a fiery red horse kills many through war—which relates to Satan who declared war on the human race back in the Garden of Eden and has killed many through the centuries through hopelessness leading to suicide, drug and alcohol abuse and false doctrine.

The **dragon** (Satan) is further described as “**having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.**” (verse 3)

The **seven heads** with their **seven diadems** (the Greek is ‘diadema’—royal crowns symbolizing power and authority) represent “**seven mountains**” which symbolize **seven world empires** (Revelation 17:9-11).

Six of these world empires were contiguous and followed in this order—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The seventh and final world empire ruled by the Antichrist, will be a ten-nation confederacy (Daniel 2:40-43)—the **ten horns** represent the ten kings (or ‘prime-ministers’, or ‘governors’) who will rule under the Antichrist. This final world kingdom will be separated from the last of the first six world empires by about 1550 years (a ‘guesstimate’).

We’ll cover this in detail when we come to Chapter 17—I’m just throwing it out now because it’s mentioned here in Chapter 12.

So, the **seven heads** represent the *seven ‘world’ empires* throughout the history of the world—six have come and gone (the Roman Empire being the last world governing empire)—the final world empire is yet to come to power.

The shifting of the **diadems** from the dragon’s **heads** to the beast’s (Antichrist’s) **horns** (Revelation 13:1) reveals the shift in power from the previous six consecutive world empires to the final world empire—the ten ‘nations’ (or ten geo-political regions) ruled by Antichrist.

If you go online, you will see that the United Nations has already divided the world into ten geo-political regions under the heading of the ‘new world order’:

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| 1. North America | 6. Latin America |
| 2. Western Europe | 7. North Africa and the Middle East |
| 3. Japan | 8. Tropical Africa |
| 4. Australia, South Africa, and the rest of the market-economy of the developed world. | 9. South and Southeast Asia |
| 5. Eastern Europe, including Russia | 10. China |

Is this going to be the actual partitioning of the world under the Antichrist?—I don’t know—maybe!

Listen, Satan as the ‘god of this world’ is in authority and has given power to the other world empires down through history (of course God allowed it) and will eventually give power to the Antichrist and his kingdom to rule over the world:

Luke 4:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

1 John 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway* of the wicked one.

We shall study the meaning of these symbols in more detail later.

Revelation 12:4 (NKJV)

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.

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

These ‘stars’ are a reference to angels—angels are depicted symbolically as **stars** elsewhere in Scripture—

Revelation 9:1 (NKJV)

¹ Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.

Job 38:7 (NKJV)

⁷ When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

When we talk about how one-third of the angels in heaven followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God—this is where we get it from. These became “fallen angels” (I believe demons are different and *could be* Nephilim).

Isaiah 14:12-17 (NKJV)

¹² "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! ¹³ For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' ¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. ¹⁶ "Those who see you will gaze at you, *And consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, ¹⁷ Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'*

Ezekiel 28:11-17 (NKJV)

¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹² "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You *were* the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone *was* your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. ¹⁴ "You *were* the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. ¹⁵ You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. ¹⁶ "By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery

stones. ¹⁷ "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you. [reference Isaiah 14:16]

Luke 10:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven..."

The question is—*"When did Lucifer fall?"*

Come on back next time and we'll take a look at this!

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