

The Revelation Chapter 12 continues the unfolding of **The Great Controversy**, Satan's waged battle against God. The chapter introduces two key figures and a prevalent theme in the Bible, namely, the **Bride of Christ** under persecution by the **Great Dragon**. Revelation chapter 12 begins with John the Revelator being given an incredible vision of two contrasting and rival figures in the heavens. The first is described as a *woman*, standing upon the moon, enshrouded with the light of the sun, and having a garland of twelve stars upon her head. The second is a *fiery red dragon*.

Q: *What does a woman in Bible prophecy represent? Consider the following when giving your answer: 2 Corinthians 11:2; Eph 5:25-27; Hosea 2:19, 20; Jer 6:2, 31:32; Isaiah 54:5, 62:5*

A: A woman in Bible prophecy symbolizes **a church**, the **Spiritual Bride of Christ**. The Bible utilizes the imagery of a traditional eastern marriage in describing the relationship between Christ and His bride, the Church. For example, Jesus is said to have gone away to prepare a place for His betrothed whom He will return to receive to Himself. Once He receives her to Himself, they then celebrate their marriage with a grand banquet. Eastern betrothals and marriages were conducted in this manner (John 14:1-3).

Q: *Consider the role of the sun, moon, and stars in this glorious vision. What do they represent? Consider the following when giving your answer:*

- Psalm 84:11
- Malachi 4:2
- Psalm 119:105
- Psalm 119:130
- John 1:7-9
- Psalm 89:36, 37

- Genesis 49:28
- Exodus 24:4
- Matthew 19:28
- Matthew 10:2-4
- Eph 2:20
- Revelation 21:14

A: The sun and the moon, which shine light upon the world, are symbols of God's two witnesses, the **Old and New Testaments**, respectively. The twelve stars represent the spiritual patriarchs of God's Church, the **Twelve Tribes of Israel** under the Old Testament, and the **Twelve Apostles** under the New Testament. Therefore, Christ's pure and chaste Church is one that stands upon the testimonies of the New Testament; is enshrouded with the light of the teachings of the Old Testament, and has the victorious example of the patriarchs and apostles as its crown of glory.

John's vision described the woman as *"travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered"*. Further, the Bible says that the woman brought *"forth a man child, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron..."* (Revelation 12:2, 5).

Q: *Describe this portion of the vision. Who is the woman's child? Consider the following: Luke 1:31-33; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 7; Psalm 2:9; Hebrews 2:14-18; Revelation 2:27, 19:15, 16*

A: The Bible states *"...when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law"* Galatians 4:4. Jesus took on humanity at the Father's appointed time, four millennia after man's fall, when it had degenerated in sin to its present condition. The Revelator's narrative does not highlight Jesus' first work of dying for the sins of men at His **First Coming**. Nor is Jesus' present ministerial work as **High Priest** in the heavenly sanctuary

noted. Rather, the narrative projects in time to Jesus' **Eternal Kingship**, when He triumphs over all earthly kingdoms with a **rod of iron** as **King of Kings and Lord of Lords**.

The second important character in the narrative is described as a great red dragon, having 7 heads, 10 horns, and 7 crowns. There is no need to speculate its identity, as the Bible clearly states the dragon is, *"that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan"* Revelation 12:9. The Bible further describes the Dragon as the one responsible for drawing a third of the stars of heaven to the earth. This work of the dragon is an allusion to ages past when the angel Lucifer rebelled, causing his expulsion from heaven, as



well as a third of the angles of God. The rebellious host was then exiled to the earth (Jude 6; Ezekiel 28:12-16; Luke 10:18; Mark 5:6-9). Consider the dragon is said to *"[stand] before the woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born"* (Revelation 12:4).

Q: *When in history did Satan attempt to kill the woman's Male Child, Jesus?*

A: The answer to this question is manifold and can be traced through the course of Bible history. God assured Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden of a **Kinsman**

Redeemer, One Who would guarantee mankind's salvation and be a Destroyer of evil (Genesis 3:15). From that time, the serpent or Satan, purposed to thwart God's plan that would ransom the human race and seal his doom. The following are a few examples of the Devil's attempts to foil God's **Everlasting Covenant**, and destroy the lineage through which Jesus Christ would be born:

- The corruption of Cain, who in turn killed his righteous brother, Abel (Genesis 4:1-10)
- Altogether perverting the **sons of God** in the time of Noah, leading to the destruction of the world (Genesis 6-8)
- The famine in the time of the sons of Jacob intended primarily to destroy the 4th son, Judah, through whom Jesus would be born (Genesis 41, 42, 47)
- Pharaoh's death decree upon all male Hebrew boys born in Egypt (Exodus 1:8-22)

The most accurate fulfillment of this prophecy, however, is found in the works of the apostate King Herod, at the time of Jesus' birth. Originally of Edomite lineage and therefore, not of the Davidic bloodline from which the traditional kings of Israel descended, Herod's rise to power through avarice, deceit, and violence made him a favored candidate to the Jewish throne by Rome, the ruling world power. His lack of Jewish heritage, his cruel disposition, and his being a pawn of the detested Romans, made Herod a feared yet hated figure among the Jews. Always distrustful and leery of possible dissent from Jewish leadership, Herod became very

The Bride of Christ

Revelation Chapter 12 – Part 1 [Based on verses 1-6]



Lesson 26

from the intoxicating pomp of Papal worship. Other Bible figures, including Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, and even Jesus Christ Himself also found refuge from society's corruptions in the wilderness. In each case, their wilderness experience prepared them to accomplish a particular work of God.

Q: *God prepared a place of refuge for His church during the trying time of tribulation lasting 1,260 years. What does this say of God's care and provision for His people? Consider the following verses also: 1 Kings 17:1-15 (compare James 5:17, 18); Isaiah 33:15, 16, 41:8-13; Psalm 46, 91, 121*

A: We should never entertain the thought that we have been left alone to face life's challenges or our mortal enemy, Satan. "...He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" Psalm 121:4. We have assurance of Jesus' vigilant and watchful care over our lives, just as He made provision for His bride, the church in the wilderness, for 1,260 years.

In this last verse, the Bible illustrates a change in the medium used by Satan for persecuting the church of God, namely, the transition from *Pagan Rome* to *Papal Rome*. As described in prior Bible studies, Satan would demote the religion of *paganism* for the more diabolical *Papal See* as his preferred medium for controlling the minds, bodies, and wealth of men - kings and commoners alike. We will further explore the *enmity* between God's true Church, the woman clothed in light, and Satan, the serpent, in subsequent Bible studies.

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Male Child, "was caught up unto God, and to his throne" Revelation 12:5. Consider the following verses affirming Jesus' ascension to heaven, following His glorification upon the cross, and being raised from the dead:

- Heb 1:1-3, 12:2
- Acts 1:6-11
- Acts 2:33-36
- 1 Peter 3:21, 22
- 1 Tim 3:16
- Acts 7:55

With the Male Child's ascension to heaven to sit upon His Father's throne, Satan redirected his attack towards Jesus' bride, the Church. Revelation 12:6 describes the woman, the true church, as having "fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore [1,260] days."



Q: *What constituted the "wilderness" where the woman fled, and when does the period of "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" occur?*

A: God's true church fled to a place of refuge from the dragon for a period of 1,260 prophetic days of years. This prophecy describes the 1,260-year era of Papal persecution from A.D.538-1798, known as the *Dark Ages*. Fleeing religious persecution and the corruptions of the populous church, while seeking to worship God based on conscience and the teachings of the Bible alone, thousands of faithful Christians made their homes in rough, remote mountain villages and caves, away

troubled once informed of the birth of the "King of the Jews" by wise men traveling from the east that came to pay homage to the infant Jesus. Seeking to destroy the child before he became a threat to his throne, Herod issued a decree to kill all children ages two and under in Bethlehem of Judea, the birthplace of Christ, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Revelation 12:4 (Micah 5:2; Matt 2:1-18; Jeremiah 31:15).



King Herod, who ruled as a representative of Pagan Rome, was responsible for seeking to "devour" Jesus at His birth, a work ultimately attributable to Satan. This prophetic and historical truth is also affirmed by the imagery used to describe Satan, the red dragon, having 7 heads, 10 horns, and 7 crowns. Recall the rise and fall of world empires recorded in Daniel Chapter 7, where Pagan Rome was described as a dreadful beast having iron teeth and ten horns upon its head. The ten horns, representing ten kingdoms that would in time arise out of divided Pagan Rome, eventually became seven horns as three were uprooted by the monarchial *Little Horn* power, the Papacy. The use of the numbers ten (10) and seven (7) to describe the red dragon is a cue to draw the reader's mind to the Roman Empire and its transformation through history.

The narrative of Revelation 12 further states that Jesus, the