

Revelation 12:

Ch11v19: “and there was seen in His temple **the ark of His testament** (covenant)”. The ark speaks of Christ and all divine promise to God’s earthly people Israel will be fulfilled in Christ (the man Child of ch12), the Mediator of God’s new covenant with Israel (the woman of ch12).

Rev 12-14 = 3rd parenthetical section of the book of Revelation.

7 personages in ch12-13; 5 in ch12 & the 2 beasts of ch13:

1. Ch12v1-2: The “**woman clothed with the sun**” = Israel.

- She travails in birth & delivers the man Child (vs5,13).
 - She makes a great escape “**into the wilderness**” where she is preserved in “**a place prepared of God**” (v6).
 - She is given “**two wings of a great eagle**” to aid her flight to “**her place**” (v14).
 - She is fed for “**a thousand two hundred and threescore days**” (v6), i.e. 3.5 years.
 - She “**is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time**” (v14), i.e. 3.5 years.
 - She is “**helped**” by the earth (v16) to survive the fierce satanic onslaught (v15-17).

2. Ch12v3-4: The “**great red dragon**” = “**the Devil and Satan**” (v9), “**the serpent**” of old (v9,14,15).

- He is defeated in war & with his angels is cast out of heaven & into the earth, a victory which is celebrated in heaven (v8-10).
- He brings “**great wrath**” to the earth dwellers, knowing “**he hath but a short time**” (v12).
- He specifically “**persecuted the woman (Israel) which brought forth the man Child**” (v13).
- He is “**wroth with the woman**” (v17), seeking her annihilation in that last (3.5 year) half of the tribulation period (v13-17).

3. Ch12v5: The “**man Child**” = Christ; Israel is the national mother of Christ (see Rom 9v5),

- He is born of the woman (vs5,13); God sent forth His Son, “**come of woman**” (Gal 4v4).
- He is about to “**rule (shepherd) all the nations with a rod of iron**” (v5), see Ps2v9.
- He is “**caught up unto God, and to His throne**” (v5), i.e. Christ’s ascension.

4. Ch12v7: “**Michael**” = the archangel (Jude v9).

- With his angels, he successfully wages war with the dragon & his angels (v7).

5. Ch12v10-17: “**our brethren**” = a faithful & believing remnant of Israel.

- They are opposed & accused by the devil “**day & night**” (v10).
- They “**overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death**” (v11).
- They are “**the remnant of her (the woman’s) seed**”, the object of the dragon’s wrath, but who “**keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ**” (v17).

5 great things in ch12:

v1: A “**great wonder in heaven**”, i.e. a great spectacle or sign, the woman.

v3: A “**great red dragon**”, i.e. the devil.

v10: A “**loud (great, JND) voice saying in heaven**”, celebrating victory over the devil.

v12: There will be “**great wrath**” when the devil is cast down unto the earth.

v14: A “**great eagle**” whose wings assist in the flight of the woman into the wilderness.

v1: John sees this “**great wonder (sign) in heaven**”; something remarkable, “**a woman clothed with the sun**”, i.e. depicting the nation of Israel.

Sun, moon & stars = symbols of authority & rule (see Gen 1v16, Gen 37v9).

In Joseph’s 2nd dream in Gen 37, the 12 stars represent the sons of Jacob / Israel.

But this is a glorious view of the woman in heaven; wearing on her head a victor’s crown of 12 stars, i.e. signifying what God intends Israel yet to be, ruling over the nations.

v2: The woman is in the closing stages of delivering a child, with the pain of labour as she awaits the imminent arrival of the man Child.

Gen 3v15 gives the 1st messianic promise, concerning the seed of the woman & the tremendous enmity & hostility between the serpent’s seed and the seed of the woman.

Isaiah 66v7: “**Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child**”, i.e. the man Child who will be Israel’s Messiah, their Deliverer, Christ.

v3: John sees another sign in heaven, “**a great (fiery) red dragon**”, i.e. the devil (v9).

This name & description emphasises the fierceness of this dreadful one, the destroyer.

He has 7 heads with 10 horns & 7 crowns; see also Rev 13v1, Rev 17vs3,7, Daniel 7v19-25.

v4: The tail of the dragon demonstrates his great power.

The dragon is prowling over the woman, waiting to devour the child “**as soon as it was born**”.

All through the OT, Satan had been seeking to destroy the seed of the woman, to cut off the line of the Saviour, the promised man Child. At the birth of Christ, Herod the Great was the instrument of the dragon in seeking to destroy the young Child, the infant Christ (Matt 2).

v5: The woman brings forth a male Son, i.e. the birth of Christ.

He ascended back to heaven & to the throne of God, waiting there until He is brought in again as the mighty Shepherd Ruler over the nations, the King of kings (see Psalm 2v9, 110v1, Isaiah 9v6).

v6: Passes over the mystery period of the Church age, to the future tribulation period.

Because of Satanic persecution, the faithful & believing remnant of the nation must flee Jerusalem, to “**a place prepared**” by God for them (see Matt 24v15-20). There they can be fed & sustained for the final half of the great tribulation, i.e. 1260 days (see Matt 24v21-22 “**those days**” 2x).

Revelation 12v7-10: War in heaven; the defeated dragon is banished to the earth.

v11-17: War on earth; the cast down dragon seeks the destruction of the woman & her seed.

v7: Great spiritual angelic warfare in heaven, likely around the mid-point of the 7 years. Michael the archangel (Jude v9), the supreme angelic being, is always linked with conflict with the devil, in support of Israel. He is “**your prince**” (Dan 10v21), “**the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people**” (Dan 12v1); he appears to take the initiative in dealing with the dragon.

v8: The defeated ones are deposed from heaven; the devil is now utterly cast out, with no further access to any region of heaven possible, such as he had in the book of Job. He is expelled from regions of heaven associated with angelic ministration & discussions (Job 1v6).

v9: The ever downward fall of the evil one; 1st from heaven to the physical earth (ch12v9 “**cast out**” 3x), then from earth into the abyss (ch20v3) and finally banished into the Lake of Fire (ch20v10).

The multiple names for the evil one emphasise different aspects of his character:

1. Dragon = the dreadful one, the destroyer, in all his savage ferocity & cruelty.
2. Serpent = the deceiver, in all his subtlety & craftiness, as seen in Eden with Eve, hence “**that old** (ancient, JND) **serpent**”, seeking now to deceive “**the whole** (habitable) **world**”.
3. Devil = diabolus, the accuser, in all his malicious slander; consistent with him being “**the accuser of our brethren**” (v10).
4. Satan = the adversary, in all his relentless opposition to God, Christ & the people of God.

v10: Heaven celebrates with worshipful praise & joy the victory of Michael over the evil one; a great voice in heaven, likely the collective voice of martyred tribulation saints (see ch6v10), declares the victory & imminent prospect of the manifested salvation of God & establishment of the millennial kingdom of Christ. Heaven is relieved there will be no more persistent accusations of Satan against God’s people.

v11: There is a faithful remnant of Israel who are saved overcomers; they give fearless verbal testimony to the precious shed blood of God’s Lamb. Satan hates to hear about his defeat at Calvary and any testimony to the glories & accomplishments of Christ.

Some of these faithful ones will be martyred during the great tribulation, “**they loved not their lives unto the death**”; they made the choice to continue in faithful testimony, and are accounted as those who overcame the evil one.

v12: While the heavens & all who dwell there, rejoice & worship at the dragon’s expulsion from heaven & casting down to the earth, the consequences of the devil coming down to the earth are going to be felt by all earth dwellers, i.e. “**Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea!**”

Satan knows he has “**but a short time**”, and makes his last stand on the earth, displaying his fierce fury in particular against Israel & those who display allegiance to God & Christ.

v13: Now cast down to the earth, the dragon directs his malicious attention & bitter fury specifically toward the woman, seeking the complete extermination of Israel, because it is the

nation that brought forth Christ “**the man**” (male One).

v14: The symbol of “**two wings of a great eagle**” given to facilitate the woman’s urgent flight, takes us back to Israel’s flight out of Egypt (Exodus 19v4).

A faithful remnant of Israel will flee rapidly “**into the wilderness**”, to her prepared place, where she will be nourished & preserved “**for a time, and times, and half a time**”, i.e. for the 3.5 year great tribulation period (see also Dan 12v7).

The exact place of refuge is not definitively stated; wherever it is, it will be a barren wilderness-like place, with nothing natural to sustain the woman. But God will supernaturally provide supplies to nourish & feed the woman, just as He did for Elijah in the day of his flight into the wilderness (1st Kings 19), when a small meal gave him supernatural strength for 40 days & nights. They are kept safe “**from the face of the serpent**”.

v15: The evil one sends forth a raging destructive torrent of persecution against the Jews. This may be a satanic-inspired multinational military attack against Israel, seeking her annihilation, i.e. Dan 9v26 “**and the end thereof [shall be] with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined**”.

v16: In the wilderness of the world, the complete annihilation of the nation is not permitted, as the woman is helped by the earth, which mitigates some of the satanic persecution. By divine providential control, the invading armies against the nation will be destroyed. God will find her friends & shelter among some of the nations, and there will be reward for those nations who help her, as the Lord describes at the judgment of the living nations in Matt 25v31-40.

v17: Because of the dragon’s failure to utterly destroy Israel, despite all his efforts, he will become even more angry in his hatred toward the women & those of her seed. The faithful believing remnant of Israel will then receive double persecution from the dragon, not only because they are Jews, but even more so because they have owned Christ as Lord & King, and who faithfully & lovingly “**keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ**”. There will be a remnant nation waiting to receive the Messiah when He appears in glory.

For us all today, as we have to experience the ongoing hostility & hatred of this dragon, the evil one, God desires us to be like these believers of a future day. We are called upon to continue steadfastly in the faith, to continue in obedience to the Word of God, to the commands of Christ & the apostolic teachings, to continue to display our love for the Lord by bearing faithful testimony for Him & His sacrifice, in our present day.