

Revelation 12

What would happen if God's Spirit did not restrain the power of sin on earth? The full force of Satan's fury would be unleashed, using armies of the earth, as well as, his demonic legions. 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2 speaks about the Holy Spirit's restraining power presently, but it also speaks about a day when God's Spirit will be removed.

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.¹

And there appeared a [great wonder](#) in heaven; [a woman](#) clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

Great sign = *mega semeion* (*Grk*) mega meaning of great size or significance and semeion means a symbol that points to a reality.

Note that the transpiring events occurred "in heaven."

"A woman" Who is this woman?

It would appear that Israel is the most likely answer. The Messiah came through the nation of Israel. Some believe this "woman" represents the elect, that is, the Church. But the Messiah did not come through the Church, rather the Church came through the Messiah.

²And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

God promised a deliverer through the Jewish people. The Incarnate Christ came to Israel. Throughout Israel's history the nation was oppressed and persecuted.

³And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having [seven heads](#) and [ten horns](#), and [seven crowns](#) upon his heads.

John reports another sign that occurs in heaven; a great red dragon is seen.

Red = bloody

¹ *The New King James Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982. Print.

Seven heads = represents seven world empires, namely, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the One world power that will be in place during the tribulation era.²

“Ten horns” = the kings who will rule under the Anti-Christ.

¹² “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast (Rev. 17:12, NKJV).

²³ “Thus he said:

The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. ²⁴ The ten horns *are* ten kings *who* shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first *ones*, and shall subdue three kings. ²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time (Dan. 7:23-25, NKJV).

Remember that a horn in Revelation symbolizes power.

“Seven crowns” = power and authority.

⁴ And his tail drew [the third part of the stars of heaven](#), and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

MacArthur notes that Satan’s evil influence is not limited to the human realm only, but also affects the realm of the angels.

The third part of the stars is in reference to the 1/3 of angels who rebelled with Satan and lost their post in heaven. They chose to support the causes of evil.

It is obvious that stars symbolize angels.

How did Satan try to devour the woman’s child?

Throughout history, the Jewish people were frequently in danger. Satan sought to destroy Israel while they were in Egypt, after the death of Joseph, at the Red Sea, through Baalim and Balak, Haman, Saul tried to kill David, and on and on. It was because the Messiah would come through the Jewish people.

² John MacArthur, Jr. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Revelation 12-22*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000), 7.

Once Jesus was born Satan used Herod as an earthly instrument to try and destroy Jesus, in the wilderness Satan tempted Jesus and at Jesus' trial and crucifixion, Satan thought he had succeeded in stopping the Redemptive plan of God.

⁵And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Christ, the Promised Messiah (Deliverer) came forth.

Christ triumphed at the Cross and Resurrection and returned to sit at the right hand of the Father. He will "rule all nations with a rod of iron..." during the Millennial Reign.

⁶And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Satan's attacks will not cease however against Israel. He will do everything in his power to prevent the fulfillment of God's word regarding the restoration of Israel (Zech 12:10-13:1; Romans 11:25-27).³

"A thousand two hundred and threescore days." = 3 and ½ years. Signifying the later portion of the Great Tribulation period.

War in Heaven

⁷And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

There is going to be one final battle waged in heaven.

Michael and his angels vs. the dragon (Satan) and his angels.

Swindoll offered:

We observe a clash between Satan and the archangel Michael (12:7-8). Michael, who has been defending God's people for millennia (Dan. 10:13, 21), will defeat the armies of Satan in heaven and cast them down to the earth. This future event probably will occur at the beginning of the seven-year tribulation, at the same time as the rapture of the church.⁴

⁸And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

³ Ibid., 11-12.

⁴ Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's New Testament Insights: Insights on Revelation*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 172.

Satan obviously will lose, since he is already a defeated foe.

War on Earth

⁹And the **great dragon** was cast out, that **old serpent**, called **the Devil**, and **Satan**, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

“Great dragon” signifies Satan’s great power.

“Old serpent” relates the identity of the serpent in the Garden of Eden as Satan.

“The Devil” = slanderer, defamer and/or false accuser.

“Satan” = adversary.

¹⁰And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Triumph over Satan will result in his being cast to the earth. That is, he will no longer be able to appear before God in heaven and accuse God’s people.

Swindoll makes a good point regarding the timing of this war:

When Satan and his demons are cast out of heaven, several significant changes result. First, he will no longer be able to gain an audience with God to accuse the Lord’s people. Second, he will no longer have access to the presence of God and be granted permission to test and tempt the saints. Third, the horrors of earthly evil will increase. Even as cries of victory resound from heaven, earthly woes ring out as Satan desperately attempts to inflict as much damage as possible during the final countdown to his own ultimate defeat.⁵

¹¹And 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.

The inhabitants of the earth will experience the full fury of Satan and his demonic hosts, but John writes of a future event in past tense. Again, this demonstrates the certainty of the event. This is what we would call a done deal, even though the event itself has not yet transpired.

¹²Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and *ye* that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitors of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Satan knows that his time is short and thus he is working as feverishly as possible to destroy the people of God and the lost.

⁵ Ibid. 174-175.

¹³And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*.

Daniel 12:1-11 describes the persecution of Israel. Remember that the Anti-Christ will make a pact with Israel at the beginning of the Great Tribulation period but will break it after 3-1/2 years.

¹⁴And to the woman were given **two wings of a great eagle**, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

“Two wings of a great eagle...” cf. Exod. 19:4 Symbolizes Israel’s escape from Satan. This depicts God’s supernatural protection of Israel.

Matthew 24:15-22

¹⁵And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

Satan will seek to rout Israel from her hiding place by unleashing all his forces in a dragnet fashion most likely.

One must realize that these images are symbolic but represent a spiritual reality. The point of this is that Satan will unleash his full fury in an effort to destroy Israel but God will deliver them. The flood represents Satan’s full scale military attacks against Israel.

¹⁶And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

God will employ natural, as well as, supernatural powers to deliver Israel.

War against the Saints

Who is the remnant of which John speaks? The answer is contained in the last phrase of this verse, “and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Tribulation saints will undergo the fury of Satan. Some equate these individuals as being Jewish believers, while others argue that it Gentile believers. Like MacArthur, this writer believes it will include all born-again followers of Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile.

¹⁷And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Satan losing again will turn his fury on those remaining on the earth that believe in and live for Jesus Christ.

MacArthur noted:

The testimony of Jesus is not testimony about Him, but the testimony He gave, the truths He taught that are revealed in the New Testament. These persecuted believers will give further evidence that their salvation is real by their obedience to the truth of Scripture.⁶

In all three wars, Satan is a loser. He will be booted out of heaven for good no longer able to accuse God's children, he will not be able to destroy Israel, nor will he be able to destroy Christ's followers. Satan's efforts will experience only a limited success. Indeed the suffering that he will inflict upon Israel and Christ's followers will be real and devastating, but he will not be able to totally annihilate them. God will intervene.

Respectfully,

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⁶ MacArthur. *Revelation 12-22*, 34.