

19. The woman, the Child, and the dragon

10/31/2004

If there is a place in the Bible that would confuse the readers because of mixed sequences, that would be the chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation. Many people try to understand this portion of the Bible in chronological order as it is written. If they do that, they would be more confused than before. To make the matter worse, there are plenty of symbols in this chapter to make the readers' heads spin.

That is one of the reasons why I felt that the Lord was leading me to produce this chronological order chart for Revelation.

A. GOING BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF ISRAEL

Revelation 12:1 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.

I believe the answer to the question of the identity of this woman in Revelation 12 is Israel.

Contextually, while the church is the bride of Christ, Isaiah and Hosea identify Israel as the wife of Jehovah.

Theologically, the answer to questions regarding any particular issue can most often be found by looking to its first mention in Scripture. Employing this principle of first mention, we first see sun, moon, and stars in a dream that pertains directly to Israel in Joseph's dream from Genesis 37:9-10.

And it is Israel who births the One who will rule with righteousness.

Women often represent religious systems in Revelation.

- Jezebel is associated with a religious system of false teaching of the church of Thyatira in Revelation 2:20.
- The Great Harlot is associated with false religion in Revelation 17:2.
- The Bride is associated with the church in Revelation 19:7-8.

By the way, Roman Catholics claim this woman is Virgin Mary, pictured as the "Queen of Heaven." Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science which is a cult said she was this woman. Both of these concepts are plain wrong.

B. ISRAEL, THE SAVIOR AND SATAN

Revelation 12:3-6 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 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. 5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

We are starting with a bunch of symbols in these passages:

Dragon, seven heads, ten horns, seven diadems, a third of the stars of heaven, a male Child, and so on.

Throughout the remainder of Revelation, the dragon refers to satan, as it does elsewhere in Scripture like Isaiah 27:1 & 51:9. The Child mentioned in v. 5 is obviously Jesus – His birth, destiny and ascension.

The sign of the fiery red dragon is interpreted in v. 9 as satan, who first appears in Scripture as the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Gen 3:15 serves as the ultimate backdrop to this struggle between the woman which is Israel and satan.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.

Just as soon as the Child was born, satan tried to destroy Him. Throughout Old Testament history, satan tried to prevent the birth of the Redeemer. There was always a “dragon” standing by, waiting to destroy Israel or the ancestors of the Messiah. Pharaoh is called a “dragon” in Ezek. 29:3 in KJV, and so is Nebuchadnezzar in Jer. 51:34 in KJV. When Jesus Christ was born, satan used King Herod to try to destroy Him in Matt. 2. Satan was not done with Israel. The Medieval Crusade, Hitler during WWII, KKK against Jews in America, White Supremacists in Europe and America, not to mention the current world foreign policies against Israel are all of satan’s ways to destroy Israel people. From U.N. to just about any countries around the world including American liberal media are against them.

If John Kerry goes to the White House, do you know what kind of people would be very happy? All the Arab nations and Philistine people who are against Israel. John Kerry was a traitor during Viet Nam war, he is still a traitor against this country in my opinion.

The dragon with the seven heads and ten horns refers to satan and the empire over which he rules during the course of time. Seven heads, horns, and seven diadems refer to satan’s brilliance, power, and glory as “god of this age”.

2 Corinthians 4:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

This 1260 days which is three and one-half year period connects these events with the final seven years according to the Daniel 9 prophecy. Revelation 12:5 describes the ascension of Jesus, and Revelation 12:6 describes yet-to-occur events in the 70th week of Daniel, between these two verses lies hundreds of years including our current time.

C. CAST OUT ONCE AND FOR ALL FROM HEAVEN

Revelation 12:7-11 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 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. 10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. 11 And they overcame him (1) by the blood of the Lamb and (2) by the word of their testimony, and (3) they did not love their lives to the death.

At the mid-point of the Great Tribulation, God will turn the tide against satan - first in heaven, then on earth. A battle will take place that will deny satan access to heaven.

Some individuals and groups, such as the Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, insist on saying that Michael is actually Jesus. That is flat out wrong.

This is a dramatic scene of battle between "good" and "bad" angels. Satan is not the counterpart of God. God has no counterpart. If anyone, satan is the counterpart of Michael the archangel.

The name 'Michael' means "who is like God?" and this certainly contrasts satan's egocentric attitude toward Jehovah – *"I will be like the Most High"* in Isa. 14:14.

V8 shows us that until this battle at the middle part of the Tribulation, satan does have access to heaven, where he accuses God's people before God.

It troubles some to think that satan has access to heaven, because of the mistaken teaching that God can allow nothing unholy in heaven. But the Bible clearly says that while satan appears on earth in Luke 4:1-13, and describes him as the prince of the power of the air in Ephesians 2:2, it also says that satan has access to heaven, where he accuses God's people before God in Job 1:6-12. Did he have a full access to the Third Heaven that mentioned in 2 Cor 12:2? I don't know.

In v9, this single verse uses many different titles for satan. These titles describe satan as vicious, an accuser, an adversary, and a deceiver. The title 'Devil' is from the Greek "diabolos", from the verb "diaballo", which has the meaning of 'defaming' or 'slandering.' He is the master accuser of the believing brethren.

The Bible describes four different falls of satan. Revelation 12:9 describes the second of these four falls.

- From glorified to profane – Ezekiel 28:14-16
- From having access to heaven to restriction to the earth – Revelation 12
- From the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years – Revelation 20
- From the pit to the lake of fire – Revelation 20

What happens in heaven occurs every day on earth as satan whispers in our ears, "You're not worthy to be blessed by God. You're not good enough to be used." He loves to hand out condemnations to the believers.

Please understand the difference between condemnation which is from satan, and conviction which is from the Holy Spirit. The condemning work of satan always pushes us away from God. The conviction of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, always draws us closer to God. The condemnation of satan is always about self, about never measuring up, about hopelessness. The conviction of the Spirit is always about forgiveness, about moving on, about God's glory and grace.

In v11, we find three very important methods against satan and his demons' accusations:

1) By the blood of the Lamb: The blood of Jesus overcomes satan's accusations. Those accusations mean nothing against us because Jesus has already paid the penalty our sins deserved. We may be even worse than satan's accusations, but we are still made righteous by the work of Jesus on the cross.

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

2) By the word of our testimony: The word of our testimony overcomes satan's deception. Knowing and remembering the work of God in our lives protect them against satan's deceptions. As faithful witnesses, we have a testimony to bear - and because we know what we have seen and heard and experienced from God, we cannot be deceived by satan's lies.

3) We should not love our lives to the death: If we do not cling to our own earthly lives, then there really is no threat satan can bring against us. If we believe to live is Christ, and to die is gain, then how can satan's violence against us be effective? No way.

*1 Cor 15:55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"
56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

D. SATAN - THE SHORT TIMER

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

Satan's power is real and terrifying, but because he knows he is beaten and has a short time left. He is like a wounded, cornered animal that fights ferociously. Why doesn't he just give up? Let's not forget that satan is utterly depraved, and probably "insane". He may have deceived even himself into thinking that he has a chance against God.

E. THE ISRAEL TO PETRA

Revelation 12:13-16 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. 14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

What are these two wings? The eagle being the symbol of America, some suggest this could be a reference to United States military power. Could it be America, the only country who has consistently stood by Israel since her return to the land in 1940? Could it be the firepower of the U.S. Navy Sixth Fleet stationed off the Mediterranean Sea? Could it be that the United States will airlift the people of Israel to Petra?

Zechariah declares that following the Abomination of Desolation, the Jews will indeed flee. But only one-third of them will make it to safety in Zechariah 13:8-9. Most Bible teachers believe the remainder of the Jews will run to the ancient city of Petra.

Located in present-day Jordan, Petra is a mysterious, miraculous city. In approximately 2000 B.C., Jacob's brother Esau settled in a volcanic crater that was approximately a mile in length. It was an incredibly secure place. To get into the crater, one

had to go through a narrow canyon only twelve feet wide in many places with a rock face between two hundred feet and one thousand feet high on either side. The entire city could be easily guarded by only fifteen soldiers marching along the ridges above its narrow entrance. The descendants of Esau, called the Edomites, dwelt in this city of Petra for centuries, believing they were invincible. Over the years, they constructed amphitheaters, banks, temples, and an aqueduct system that baffles scientists to this day. With a population of one million, no one can figure out how they got enough water into the city to sustain the inhabitants. Eventually, the Edomites were wiped out entirely due to widespread plague according to a God's prophecy by Obadiah.

For many years, people considered Petra as the lost city of Atlantis – a mythological place that never really existed.

In 1812, however, a Bible teacher/explorer/adventurer named Johann Burckhardt was determined to find Petra. And when he finally did, he couldn't believe what he saw. Although it had been abandoned for centuries and remains desolate to this day, he was amazed by its grandeur and splendor. Perhaps most arresting, however, were the two huge eagles' wings carved into the rock at the very entrance of the city. As we have just read in this chapter, the remnant of Israel will be saved by the wings of an eagle. A number of years ago, W. E. Blackstone, another Bible teacher, was so convinced that Petra will be the place in which the Jews are kept safe, he purchased thousands of Hebrew New Testaments, underlined passages like Matthew 24 and Revelation 12, and left them in earthen jars throughout Petra. When the Jews get there, the Bibles will be waiting for them. Ain't that totally cool?

In v15, we read that Satan will spew water out his mouth like a flood. During the study of Revelation, we get to learn the meaning of the symbol 'water' as "people." So, in my opinion, this is the Antichrist's army after Israelites. But God supernaturally protects His own people with an earthquake.

F. SATAN'S WAR AGAINST THE REMNANTS

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ

This may refer to Israel and Gentiles who come to faith in Jesus during the Great Tribulation. These two groups are particular targets of Satan's persecution in the last days.

G. APPLICATIONS

1) Condemnation comes from Satan, but conviction comes from the Holy Spirit.

The condemning work of Satan always pushes us away from God. The conviction of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, always draws us closer to God. The condemnation of Satan is always about self, about never measuring up, about hopelessness. The conviction of the Spirit is always about forgiveness, about moving on, about God's glory and grace.

Romans 8:1-2 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

2) We can overcome satan and his demons' accusations by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of our testimony and not holding onto our earthly lives.

Because our sins are cleansed by Jesus' blood, our testimony reminds us God's faithfulness and we have hope for eternal life in heaven.