

# GROWINGdeeper

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## REVEALED

### Part Nine: The Woman, Dragon, and Child *Revelation 12:1-17*

#### 1. The Birth (1-6)

- *Genesis 3:15, 37:9; Psalm 2; 1 Thessalonians 4:17;*  
*Revelation 15:1, 21:12, 14; John 14:1-3;*  
*Matthew 2:13; Exodus; 2 Kings 4:42-44; Daniel 12:1*

#### 2. The War in Heaven (7-12)

- *Ephesians 6:12; Jude 9:6, 9; Job 1:6-7; Luke 10:18;*  
*2 Corinthians 11:3; Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28;*  
*Revelation 2:10; Genesis 3:1-7*

#### 3. The War on Earth (13-17)

- *Exodus 14:15-15:10, 19:4; Psalm 18; Joshua 1:9;*  
*Matthew 22:37; Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6;*  
*Daniel 7:25, 12:7; Deuteronomy 5:7-21;*  
*1 Peter 5:8-9*

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**Revealed:**  
**Uncovering the Mystery of Revelation**  
**Part Nine: Revelation 12:1-17**  
**The Woman, Dragon, and Child**

**Intro:**

Hey everyone, we continue through the book of Revelation and today we are going to read through chapter 12. Thank you for asking questions the last few weeks, please continue to ask them, at the end of the series, we are going to have a Q and A time that you won't want to miss. Last week we heard Pastor James share with us about the 3<sup>rd</sup> woe, the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, the consummation, the end. Are you excited to find out what happens after "the end"? Well what takes place in the Scripture today does not happen after "the end". Remember, Revelation was not written chronologically. Some TV shows you have to watch starting from the beginning in order to enjoy it the most. Like the Bachelorette. Other shows, you can watch one episode from one year, and watch another from a different year, and you can still enjoy the show and follow what is happening – like Storage Wars, The Price is Right, and Wheel of Fortune. Chapter 12 is written like a drama production, or a show. There are characters, and fighting, and good vs evil. In order for us to best understand "the end" John is backing up the camera on the production so we can see everything in its entirety from beginning to end, similar to these two pictures (show two pictures). We can see great detail when up close to the coin, but today we are backing up so we can see more of everything but in less detail. Today you are getting a kind of heavenly history lesson of the ages; the theme is the ongoing conflict between God's people and the devil.

*Pray*

**1. The Birth (1-6)**

Let's read:

"A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth." (Revelation 12:1-2, niv)

The first three words are important, "great spectacle," (Greek *semeion mega*) this phrase only occurs twice in Revelation (12:1; 15:1). The word *spectacle* in the NIV is translated as "sign," but other versions use "miracle," or "wonder," which is telling us that this event is filled with meaning beyond itself.

Our first character to be seen is a woman, wearing a crown (Greek *stephanoi*), of victory. The victory she has is important and will come up later in the chapter. This woman symbolizes Eve, the mother of humanity, Mary, the mother of Jesus, Israel, the mother of Christianity, and the Church, the bride of the Christ. Most scholars agree that this superhuman woman is not actually Eve or Mary despite having some similarities. Most

scholars also agree that the mother is either Israel or the Church or both. The 12 stars could represent the tribes of Israel, or if the woman is the Church, the stars could represent the 12 apostles. There are commentaries supporting one or both, so it is probably best to think of the woman as representing the people of God.

“Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.” (Revelation 12:3-4, niv)

In comes the dragon which appears in the New Testament only in Revelation. Here the color red represents evil and is symbolizing the murderous work of the dragon. Spoiler alert – as we will read in verse 9, the dragon is the devil. The seven heads suggest complete wisdom; the seven crowns point to a blasphemous kingly claim. The crown the dragon wears comes from the root word diadem, which is different than the crown the woman wears. This crown is a symbol of worldly royalty, not a crown of victory (*stephanoi*), like the woman wears. Horns signify power. A sweep of the tail gives the Dragon followers, represented by the stars falling to the earth, meaning he was easily able to take 1/3 away. That is a lot of evil in our world today, but still not enough compared to God’s army.

“She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.” (Revelation 12:5-6, niv)

The verb translated “rule” literally means “shepherd”. Jesus is the one who will rule all nations; he is the good shepherd, so the child is Jesus. Immediately after the Jesus’ birth we read about his ascension being represented by his being snatched up to God and to his throne. The snatched up word is also used from Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, describing the Christian being “caught up” to meet the Lord in the air. Remember, we are looking at this through a wide angle lens, and throughout Revelation, John doesn’t spend time talking about the human side to Jesus, or the life of Jesus. John focuses on the divine side, the exalted Christ, the one who will come and rescue His people in the time of our distress.

Next we read about the woman fleeing the dragon into the wilderness. Traditionally wilderness is a place of refuge in times of trouble. The emphasis is on God’s provision since the woman goes to a place prepared for her by God, which is similar to the phrase of Jesus promising to prepare a place for his disciples (John 14:1-3). Fleeing is a familiar apocalyptic theme, historically referring to the flight of Mary Joseph and Jesus from King Herod (Matthew 2:13), or the exodus of the Israelites (Exodus). These verses that parallel chapter 12 are in your notes. Whether I refer to them or quote them, the references are in your notes so you can check it out yourself.

1260 is a symbolic apocalyptic number for a divinely restricted period of time of 3.5 years. You may remember Pastor Mike explaining this number a few weeks ago. This number represents a time of intense suffering, but the woman (or what she stands for) will be protected by God during that time. This verse is also connected to another verse later in this chapter, so we will talk more about it in a minute. I will say that the 1260 days is

expressed a few other ways in the Bible: as 42 months, 3.5 years, or time, times, and half a time.

## 2. The War in Heaven (7-12)

“Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.” (Revelation 12:7-9. niv)

I found it interesting that Michael the archangel leads the army and defeats the dragon, not Jesus. This scene shows us the power angels have, especially the angels on God’s side. Verse 9 begins and ends with the dragon’s defeat and banishment. I love watching fight scenes and I can only imagine how amazing this one would have been. How incredible it would have been to watch Michael lead God’s army against the dragon. When you watch a fight scene there is usually a pretty obvious bad guy that the viewer is rooting against. Had we seen the dragon lose and thrown out of heaven for not being strong enough, or smart enough or worthy enough to even fight Michael, it would be time for a victory dance, time for a fight song, which leads us to verse 10

“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.’” (Revelation 12:10-12, niv)

These 3 verses are like the victory song – or the fight song heard after winning a game. A hymn of praises heard from Heaven in response to their defeat of Satan. John hears a loud voice in heaven – which is debated in commentaries to be either God, Jesus, Angels, the 24 elders, Saints in heaven or all of above. Most do agree that while we don’t know for sure who said it, the exact identity of the voice is not important, but the message is vital.

The words “NOW HAVE COME” signify the establishment that God’s kingdom is a present reality related to the expulsion of Satan that in turn reflects Christ’s victory on the cross. Despite evil in the world, God’s salvation, Power, and kingdom are present realities. Salvation is not just about getting to heaven (although that’s nice too). Salvation includes protection, preservation, healing and wholeness that “NOW HAVE COME” through Jesus. You can have those things, now.

Which, we really need, because the devil lost the war in heaven, was expelled and thrown down to earth, wages war against those on earth, he is angry, and he knows that his time is short. All that combined is bad news for us, or at least it could be. Going on to verse 13, it says:

### 3. The War on Earth (13-17)

“When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach. Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.” (Revelation 12:13-17, niv)

The woman was protected during the time of suffering. She was given wings, a place was prepared for her, and she was helped by the earth.

The reference to **the two wings of a great eagle** suggests swift and powerful protection. The same figure described ancient Israel’s preservation and ultimate escape from Pharaoh:

“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.” (Exodus 19:4, niv)

Unexpectedly, the earth helps the woman escape. There’s not much the commentaries I read agree on concerning this flood and the earth swallowing it. The one common theme is that the writer, John, is expressing the idea that the Church is preserved in a wonderful and even miraculous way from the efforts of the devil.

The mention of **time, times and half a time** is the only instance that Revelation uses the phrase. This is the fourth and final reference to a three and a half year period of intense suffering, otherwise called “42 months” (Revelation 11:2) or earlier in verse 6 John refers to the time period as “1,260 days” (11:3; 12:6). The Book of Daniel also used the time, times, and half a time phrase to identify a coming intense time of trouble (Daniel 7:25; 12:7). And in 168 BC, The Jews suffered horrible persecution and the desecration of their temple, for a period of 3.5 years. This means the original readers of Revelation understood instantly when they read these numbers that John was referring to the same thing Daniel had in mind, “a limited time of great suffering.” Many scholars agree that because John is inconsistent in the way he describes the time period, John, like Daniel, is not necessarily describing a literal 3.5 years’ time frame. Whether it’s literal or figurative, whatever the time frame is, the woman is protected during that time, and because of that the Dragon takes out his anger on her offspring.

#### Closing

The bad news is, we are the offspring, and we are living on earth during the time of the dragon. Not just the dragon, but thousands demons at his disposal. They are pursuing us. 1 Peter 5:8-9 tells us to...

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

The enemy might be trying to persuade us in believing that God doesn't love you, or that God doesn't have time for you, or maybe that you don't have time for God. Too busy for God, maybe even too busy doing good things. The enemy accuses us of being evil, or not good enough for God. Too often, the enemy wins too. Do you love Jesus? Do you believe the eyewitness accounts we read in the Gospels? Do you follow God's commands? If you do, then before you walk out that door, you better be ready for battle, because the dragon is coming for you. Now is not the time to be afraid. We are commanded from Joshua to...

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9. niv)

Yes we live in the time of the Dragon. But we aren't fighting him alone. Everyone in this world, who is a follower of Jesus, is fighting the same dragon.

No chapter of the entire Bible has a broader or more timeless sweep than this one. These are events that keep happening throughout the ages. The woman exists wherever people are committed to God; the dragon always fights against the woman, her son, and other children. God always protects his people, despite the fierce satanic onslaughts they must endure.

As God's people today, we are to see ourselves as living out the end of the drama played in chapter 12. When the "dragon went off to make war against those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus," we are there. We are the characters in this part of the production. This is our fight too. A war God wins! As God's Church, we win.

Prayer

**Jesus, last words were:**

"I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

Knowing Jesus is with you till the end of the age, go, and slay the dragon.