

Revelation #31**March 19, 2023****Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon****Today's Message: The Sign of the Woman and of the Dragon; Revelation 12:1-6**

Chapter 12 begins the great war to end all wars. From Revelation 12:1 through 20:10, we see Satan at war, launch his final assault against the eternal, divine purposes of God. It proves futile! Even with all his powerful intrigue and efforts, in the end, those efforts will fail. The great victory belongs to Him who sits on the throne and the Lamb of God! Revelation 19:11-21 describe the King of kings and the Lord of lords riding out and defeating the rebellion of the beast, and of the kings of the earth and of the armies of the earth. Then, as Christ establishes His millennial kingdom on earth Satan is bound and incarcerated in the Abyss for 1,000 years (20:1-3) At the end of the 1,000 Satan is released and mounts one last rebellion. Then, as Satan's fury reaches its final pitch, the Lord will devour that devil with fire from heaven (20:7-10). In an instant Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire of punishment where he will be incarcerated eternally!

The next thing John sees after seeing God's temple in heaven open— John sees signs. The sign of a woman and the sign of a dragon. Both signs appear in heaven (12:1, 3).

I. (12:1-2) John sees the sign of a woman**A. "A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven"**

1. The use of "sign" communicates to us that what John sees is NOT a real woman standing on the moon, but a symbolic or figurative reality.
 - a) This teaches us two things
 - (1) Unless we are directed to a scene being a "sign" we can confidently take it as a literal event.
 - (2) When John refers to a scene or event as a sign, we are to take that sign to be symbolic of a great truth.
 - (a) There are seven "signs" in the last half of Revelation
 - (i) 12:1, 3; 13:13, 14; 15:1; 16:14; 19:20

B. "A woman"

1. First, in Revelation there are four women depicted, "symbolic of a spiritual system or the development of major importance. Although these women are symbols, they represent real people who participate in each system of development in real history. So although the symbols these women represent

may span more than an individual lifetime, at any given time in history, these women consist of a portion of the human population.” (Garland)

2. The four women in Revelation and who they represent
 - a) Jezebel of Thyatira. She represents the apostate church both in Revelation 2:20 and as her offspring contribute to the Great Prostitute, or Harlot of Revelation 17.
 - b) The woman here in Revelation 12. She struggles to give birth and flees from the dragon into the wilderness (12:6). See below for more information.
 - c) The Great Prostitute of Revelation 17. She represents the apostate church thriving during the last half of the great tribulation.
 - d) The Bride of Christ, the Lamb. She is the faithful, true church
3. Who is the woman of Revelation 12?
 - a) She is not Mary, the mother of Jesus because the description of her fleeing into the “desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days (12:6)” doesn’t fit her life.
 - b) She is not *The Church*
 - (1) First, because the child from her womb will rule the nations with an iron scepter (12:5).
 - (a) This is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is the One who will rule the nations with an iron scepter (Psalm 2:7; Rev. 2:27; 19:15).
 - (2) The Church did not give birth to Christ. Christ gave birth to the Church! (Benfield)
 - c) The woman represents Israel! Israel has elements which reflect the role of Mary and which stretch back all the way to Eve and the promised redeemer of Genesis 3:15 and run through history to the Second Coming of Christ and His Millennial Kingdom! She represents the historic development of God’s overall redemptive plan concerning Christ!
 - (1) God promises a Redeemer: Genesis 3:15: God said to the serpent, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall crush your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”
 - (2) God established Israel: The establishment of a people by God, through Abraham, through whom would come the Redeemer! (Is. 7:14; 9:6-7; Micah 5:2; Romans 9:5).

- (3) God fulfills part of His redemption plan at His First Coming through the virgin birth from Mary (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:25; Lk. 1:34)
 - (4) God fulfills His plan in Christ's Second Coming to establish the Millennial Kingdom in the line of David, to rule the nations and to restore Israel! (See Is. 9:7; Jer. 23:5-6; 30:9; Amos 9:11; Zec. 6:12-13; Luke 1:32-33; Acts 1:6; Rev. 20:4)
 - d) In Summary: The Woman represents the historic development of God's plan to deliver His people from the tyranny of sin and rebellion through a Redeemer, with the ultimate fulfillment taking place at the Second Coming, the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom and the final judgment of God.
- C. "...clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars on her head."
- 1. We can't help but think of Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9-10.
 - a) In that dream Jacob is the sun. Jacob is an heir of the Abrahamic covenant. The moon may be alluding to Rachel, his mother.
 - b) And he saw 11 stars, which were the other sons of Jacob.
 - 2. In Revelation 12 the sun and moon and 12 stars definitely point to Israel
 - a) The sun indicate Israel's permanency as a nation
 - b) The moon may allude to God's covenantal relationship with Israel since the moon cycles dictated many of God's prescribed times of worship (Neh. 10:33; Ps. 81:3; Is. 1:13-14; Col. 2:16)
 - c) The 12 stars, representing the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - 3. Summary: We can learn that God is not finished with Israel, but has set her aside, protecting her. I think we can understand that from 12:6, also.
- D. (12:2) "She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth."
- 1. Remember, through Israel came Messiah
 - 2. The Pain is symbolic as Israel suffered for generations waiting for Messiah.
 - a) Israel's longing was for God to send a Savior/Deliverer
 - 3. But the birth is literal for it found its fulfillment in the **virgin birth** of Christ by Mary!

II. (12:3-4) John sees the sign of a great red dragon

- A. The Great Red Dragon
 - 1. Is Satan. See 12:9
 - a) Symbolic. Satan is not really a dragon.
 - (1) "Red" is symbolic, depicting his evil, violent, vicious nature.
 - (2) Constantly attacking the woman and her child.

2. The Red Dragon has seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.
 - a) Looking at the history of Israel, MacArthur notes that there have been seven consecutive empires running their course under Satan's dominion.
 - (1) Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the future empire of Antichrist.
 - b) MacArthur also notes that the final kingdom ruled by Antichrist will be ruled by 10 horns (kings) under the authority of Antichrist (17:12). And that the shifting of the 10 horns to the beast in 13:1 reveals the shifting of power from the six previous empires to the 10 kings of the final empire under Antichrist.
 3. The vast reach of the great red dragon
 - a) "His tail swept a third of the stars of heaven and flung them to the earth. These "stars" are the **dragon's angels** (See 12:7, 9)
 - b) This is describing Satan's excommunication from heaven
 - (1) See also Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28: 12-17
 - c) Fallen angels numbering hundreds of millions
 - (1) Example: Rev. 9:16 tells us that 200,000,000 demons, who were bound near the Euphrates River will be released.
- B. (12:4b) "The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth..."
1. All through history Satan has been relentless in usurping God's Sovereign authority, and His plan of redemption..
 - a) First, when pride filled his heart and he rebelled against God in heaven
 - b) Then, in the Garden of Eden when he deceived the woman by undermining God's Word.
 - c) By enticing Cain to murder righteous Abel
 - d) By supplying Abraham with the son of a slave woman to be his heir.
 - e) When he enticed Pharoah to order the killing of Israeli babies
 - f) Numerous times when Israel was tempted to idol worship.
 - g) The attempted murder of David several times by Saul
 - h) Haman's attempt to have the Jewish people erased by holocaust
 - i) Herod's attempt to kill Messiah by killing all babies in Bethlehem
 - j) The temptations of Jesus in the wilderness
 - k) The betrayal of Jesus by Judas
 - l) The crucifixion of Jesus
 - m) Heresy in the church throughout church history...even our own day.
 - n) Anti-semitism, holocaust, the secularization of modern Israel
 - o) The coming Anitchrist and the desecration of the tribulation temple.

- p) You and me, by discouraging, raising doubts, questioning the reality of God and His promises.
- q) Reimagining the Gospel message; Heresy: denial of sin, hell and judgment
- r) Feminization of males; masculinization of females; gender confusion, homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle in the church. **Etc, etc.**

III. (12:5-6) John sees the literal birth of a male child born to the woman

A. Regardless of Satan's ruthless efforts, the woman—Israel— brought forth a son!

1. This birth marks the incarnation of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ!
 - a) "Who according to His human nature, was a descendent of David" Romans 1:3.
 - b) The Woman—Israel—brought to birth the Messiah, fulfilling the word of God: Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2!
2. This birth puts Satan on notice that every scheme of Satan **will fail!** For God promised that "No weapon formed against you will prosper;" (Is. 54:17)
 - a) Satan **could not stop** the cross/ His death as the believer's salvation
 - b) Satan **could not stop** His burial for the removal of sin's power.
 - c) Satan **could not stop** His resurrection for the believer's justification.
 - d) Satan **could not stop** His ascension to the right hand of the Father as the perfect Savior!

(1) **"And her child was snatched up to God and to His throne."**
(12:5b)

 - e) Satan **could not stop** the giving of the Holy Spirit for the believer's comfort.
 - f) Satan **could not stop** the transmission of Word of God through the ministry of the Spirit to the Apostles.
 - g) Satan **can not stop** the church from growing despite persecution.
 - h) During the tribulation, unable to defeat the birth and activity of Christ on earth and through His Church, Satan will increase his efforts to wipe out the Jewish people.

(1) But God has promised to save Israel in the end!

- (a) Zech. 12:10-13:1: "They **will** look on Me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child...On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity."

(b) Satan will not stop God from Saving Israel (Ro.
11:25-27)

i) Satan **will fail** to destroy Israel because God will supernaturally hide them.

(1) Rev. 12:6: "The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she would be nourished/ cared for for 1,260 days."

B. Do you know Jesus as your Savior, Who saves you and keeps you saved eternally?