REVELATION

Chapter 12

Overview

John sees an interplay between a woman and a dragon, symbolizing the nation of Israel and Satan.

SATAN'S FORMER HATRED FOR GOD AND HIS PEOPLE (12:1-5)

- His sin at the beginning (12:3-4): This seems to refer to his original fall.
- His sin at Bethlehem (12;1-2, 4-5)
 - Satan's persecution of God's nation (12:1-2)
 - Satan's persecution of God's Son (12:4b, 5b)
 - The birth of Jesus (12:4a, 5a)
 - The ascension of Jesus (12:50)

The first character: A woman with child – Israel (vv.1-2) – see Genesis 37:9-11

- She is not identified, but it is clear who she is.
- She is clothed with the sun, and the moon is under her feet, and she has upon her head a crown of stars. This refers to Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9-11.
 - Sun represented the father Jacob, moon the mother, and the twelve stars the brothers. The dream was a picture of Israel being saved from destruction.
- She is pregnant and the child is pictured as being born.
 - This refers to Jesus Christ. He and He alone was born to rule all nations (Psalm 2:9). He is also exalted to the throne of God.

Who is this woman with child? 4 positions

- Some say she is Mary, the mother of Jesus. But there are just too many supernatural things said about this woman for her to be an earthly or human being.
- Some say she is the church. But this is difficult because the church did not give birth to Christ. Christ gave birth to the church.
- Some say she is the ideal Zion, Jerusalem, Israel, the chosen people, the community of God from which Christ came. The mother then represents all the true people of God, those before Jesus came and those after He came.
- Some say the woman presents Israel, the very people who gave birth to Jesus Christ. (Romans 9:5; Isaiah 66:7-8). Israel travails in pain to bring forth the Christ child.

The second character: A great red dragon (vv.3-4)

- Description of dragon
 - 7 heads: seven is the number of completeness and fullness. Satan is complete in intelligence; he has full knowledge and knows what he is doing. He is not all knowing but is knowledgeable about his actions.
 - 7 crowns: symbolizes authority, rule, and dominion a crowned ruler who has a kingdom that he rules over.
 - 10 horns: symbolizes great power, but power that pierces, rips and tears—all in the most ferocious and vicious way. It symbolizes that he uses his head and authority in an evil way.
- Origin of the dragon

The second character: A great red dragon (vv.3-4) continued

- Origin of the dragon
 - His tail draws a third part of heaven. That is, Satan pulls and drags a third of the stars (angels) of heaven.
 - He did cast them down or threw them down. This is past tense; that is, it tells us what Satan did long ago.
- Aim of the dragon
 - To devour the woman, to destroy Israel. He is out to get God and destroy God's people. Satan has attempted to hurt God, by doing all he could to devour the woman, the line of Israel. He did all he could to keep the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, from being born. Now, Satan tries to destroy all those who try to follow Christ. (see handout The Promised See Lineage and The Strategies of Satan)

The third and main character: a man child – Jesus Christ (v.5)

- To rule
 - Rules by the cross. Makes it possible for men to be forgiven of their sins and to stand before God free from sin.
 - Bring the kingdom of God to the earth
- To be exalted
 - Jesus shall be worshipped forever and ever

SATAN'S FUTURE HATRED FOR GOD AND HIS PEOPLE (12:6-18)

- The woman in the wilderness (12:6, 13-18): Israel will be persecuted by Satan during the Great Tribulation (12:13, 15, 17-18).
 - Israel will be protected by God during the Great Tribulation (12:6, 14, 16).

SATAN'S FUTURE HATRED FOR GOD AND HIS PEOPLE (12:6-18) continued

- The war in the heavens (12:7-12): Some believe this will occur in the middle of the Great Tribulation.
 - The results (12:7-9)
 - The defeat of Satan (12:7-8): Michael the archangel will defeat him.
 - The dismissal of Satan (12:9): He will be cast down to earth.
 - The reaction (12:10-12)
 - Satan will be filled with wrath (12:10b, 12c).
 - Saints will be filled with joy (12:10a, 11-12a).
 - Sinners will be filled with fear (12:12b).

Michael and his armies

• Described as "one of the chief princes" who stands guard over Israel and battles demonic forces for God's people. As the commander of the heavenly army of good angels, Michael is Satan's angelic counterpart, who stands toe to tow with the devil.

Offspring (12:17) The tribulation saints

• The woman will be protected, but the "rest of her offspring" –all other believers in Christ during the future Tribulation—will be subject to persecution and martyrdom.

The Devil is Defeated

- Luke 22:31-32
- Ephesians 6:12-13
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- James 4:7-8
- 1 Peter 5:8-10
- 1 John 4:4